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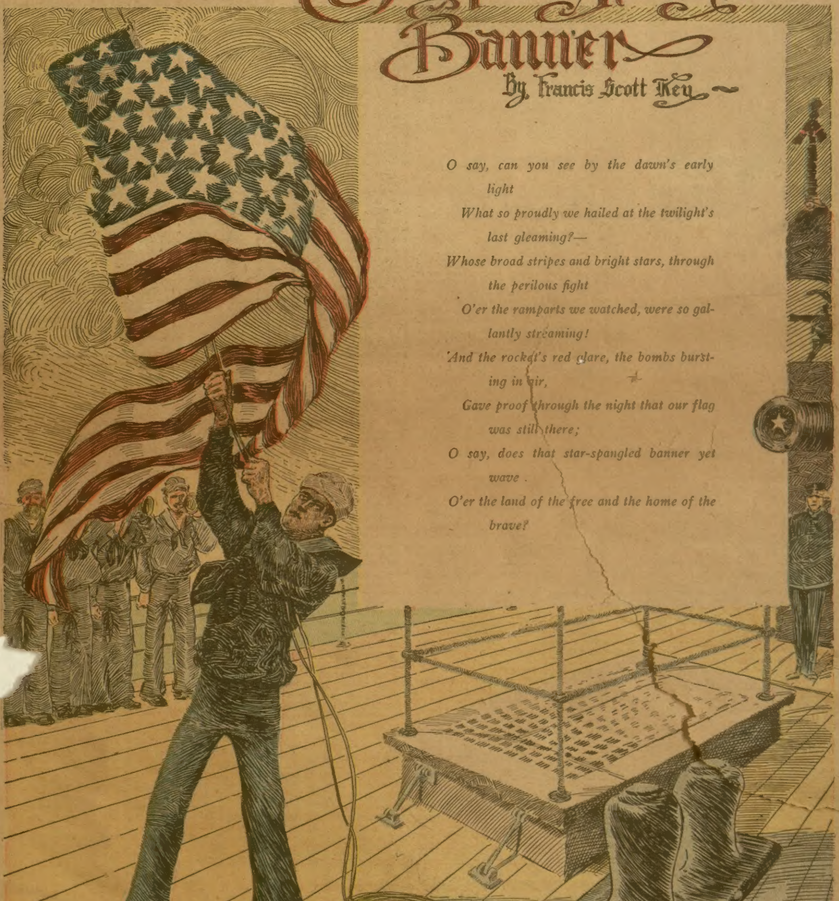
The Star-Spangled Banner

By Francis Scott Key

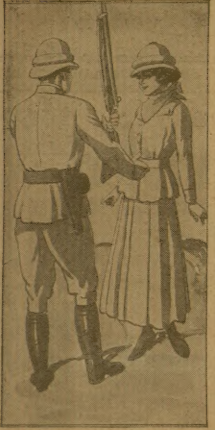


O say, can you see by the dawn's early
light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's
last gleaming?—
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through
the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag
was still there;
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet
wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the
brave?

A Rubber Deal Romance

Or, WHAT HAPPENED IN HONDURAGUA

By Rhuddlan Marsh



"Can you use it? '

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CHAPTER I.

THE prospect had its redeeming features, no doubt, but the two men who stood at the edge of the tangled tropical underbrush, gazing blankly out across the sedgy savanna beyond, didn't seem to appreciate its particular style of beauty. They looked upon a morass, illimitable, to all appearances, and in the last degree scummy and forbidding.

The man standing by the three-legged instrument of brass, disconsolately screwing a cap over its one glassy eye, swore softly, but feelingly. The other man, standing with an open notebook in hand and with pencil that slid in aimless wanderings down the page from the place where the last entry in a precise column of figures had been made, broke forth into bitter lamentations.

"And this," he said, "is my patrimony!"

"Your seventy-five thousand acres of virgin rubber forest," echoed the other, "for which you refused fifty thousand dollars, sight unseen!"

"This my celebrated rubber forest!" went on the first speaker. "Dickie, I can hear my poor old Dad on his dying bed. 'Jack,' he said, 'Jack my boy, I leave you the old place—that's something, you and mother will have a home, at least—and I leave you the tract in Honduragua. The title is straight, Jack. It should stand you for a tidy fortune some day, my boy.' My poor old Dad! He was so well content in leaving me that vast tract of tropical forest. And there it lies. Look at it, Dickie. That infernal, green-scummed swamp! That stretch of sedgy, stagnant water—that damnable quagmire, reaching out yonder till it makes a fellow's eyes tired to look at it! That's my rubber forest."

"I see," responded Dick, wearily.

"I'm mad as a hornet," blazed forth the heir, with a tragic gesture. Then he laughed. After that he grinned and shook himself, kicking the mud from his boots toward the swamp. "On the contrary," he added, "I am lively as a cricket and happy as a lark. Let's drop it and forget it."

He turned to where a greasy-looking native was nursing a parti-colored pole. "Hi, there, Leon!" he called. "Get a move. Coffee! Grub!" He supplemented this appeal with a few well-chosen words in Spanish that sent the native hastily pattering back into the wood.

Jack turned to his companion. "And now," he said, "we'll celebrate in proper style, with a strip of bacon and a beaker of black coffee, the finding, after weary search—wearier than the search for the Holy Grail or the Golden Fleece—the finding of the seventy-five thousand acres of rubber forest left to one Jack Blanchard by his dear old Dad, and found by that same Jack Blanchard and his incompetent accomplice, Richard O'Mahoney, in the heart of Honduragua, just where it was when the Lord made it, 'steen million years ago — just where it was when the last rubber-necked, bat-winged, tooth-beaked pterodactyl stuck his ungodly feet in its slimy waters—just where it was when the aforementioned old gentleman bit and bought it—just where it was, in fine, when the present incumbent refused fifty thousand dollars for it, when the Pan-American Rubber Company, of New Jersey, in its anxiety to acquire quick title to imposing tracts of land, was foolish enough to offer real money for it."

The two men started back over the trail by which they had come to the border of the swamp.

"Now I wish I had sold it—almost I do," said Jack.

"Then sell it now—for Heaven's sake, sell it! Why not? Be sure they're not going to come straightway down into the howling wilderness just to make sure that this little tract has rubber trees growing all over it with the due degree of frequency. It isn't rubber trees they want; it's a title to pass on to the suckers. They bought the rest of their holdings, a hundred thousand acres or more, sight unseen from those Englishmen, and they may be counted on to follow the same course again."

"But——"

"Wait. I'm not through. Just a word by cable to Moore & Jones in New York, instructing them to close the deal for you, and the thing is done. Before the ticker is out this afternoon the fifty thousand can be yours and the Pan-American can have its swamp and welcome."

"It won't do. Won't do at all."

"And why won't it?"

"Richard O'Mahoney," said Jack, sententiously, "have you been my confidential adviser for these two years now without learning that I have a residuum of honesty of the common, or garden, variety? What to your benighted and unregenerate mind seems the proper thing, to my enlightened and less piratical eyes, Mr. O'Mahoney, seems quite improper—an exceedingly shady trick, in fact. And so——"

"Aw, dry up!" said Dick.

"All joking aside, old man," said Jack, "I feel rather squeamish about doing it. It isn't the square thing at all."

"Who wants to do the square thing by P.-A. Rubber? It's an out-and-out fake concern, loaded and primed for the express purpose of unloading a hundred thousand shares of stock on this generation of suckers."

"Sophistry, my boy. Sophistry. We won't think of it. You wouldn't do it yourself. We're soaked, that's all. That water privilege might do for frog culture—can't think of anything else that it might be put to. Hope the taxes aren't exorbitant. If they are—good night! The Government of Honduragua can have this pond of ours, and welcome."

"Our pond?" said Dick. "Not on your life. Your pond, if you please. I won't be quoted as joint owner of the thing. First thing I know you'll be saddling back taxes on me."

"Oh, all right," said Jack, meditatively. He was gazing off through the underbrush that skirted the swamp. Presently he pointed with his finger.

"See that sapling yonder, Dick? Do you know I've been looking at the thing, and really think it's a rubber tree. What do you think?"

"That bush? I don't think."

"Leon, come here," called Jack to the native, who was approaching with a bunch of camp duffle on his back. When Leon drew near Jack explained to him in a melange of English and Spanish that he wanted the aforementioned sapling inspected with a view to determining whether or not it was a rubber tree. When the native had gone, Jack turned to his companion again.

"I rather think it is, don't you?" he said.

"I don't think, I tell you," responded Dick, crossly. "What's it to you if it's a rubber tree or a kinnikinic bush or a cedar of Lebanon?"

"All the same, I'm going to find out. Going to if I have to camp here till that confounded bush buds and blossoms. Well, Leon?"

"Si, senor. Rubber tree. No good. Crooked."

"My luck. Only rubber tree I've got is crooked. Dick, my boy, we'll take the first steamer for the States. We'll leave this God-forsaken reach of scummy water to its just fate—to abide unmolested through the long years while the taxes grow and grow, till at last the Government that sold it once for thirty-nine cents an acre takes it back to its bosom again. I'm through. I may be a mean man, but I'm not mean enough to sell that to anybody."

"Then let's pack and get," said Dick. "Makes me mad, though, to think that if we had only let well enough alone, hadn't come down here for a personal survey of this mud-puddle, we might have sold it for fifty thousand dollars and your seventeen-jeweled conscience wouldn't have got wise to the trick at all."

"Yes, fifty thousand plunks, or a thousand shares of Pan-American."

"P.-A. Rubber be——"

"Oh, by all means. By——"

Jack paused and looked at his companion with a light of wild surmise in his face. "By Jove, I've got it! A thousand——"

He stood looking out over the swamp with a slow grin spreading on his face.

"Richard, my boy," he said after a time, "I have an idea. It scintillates. Mark you: I scorn to take advantage of any misguided wretch who would sink fifty thousand good United States plunks in that slough of despond—mark that I hereby declare, aver, and set forth that I couldn't accept the bare, proverbial thirty cents for these riparian rights. Nevertheless, I will exchange my birthright for some such mess of pottage as a thousand shares of Pan-American rubber stock—just for greens—for the mere fun of the thing, you know."

Dick made a gesture of despair.

"Give it up," he said. "Your morality is too fine drawn for me. Can't for the life of me see where you draw the line between exchanging a worthless piece of ground——"

"Water," corrected the other.

"Of water then—for fifty thousand dollars in cash—and exchanging that same piece of land——"

"Water," persisted Jack.

"I stand corrected—and exchanging that same stretch of water for $100,000 worth of stock."

"Look here, Dick. No, I mean 'look there.' See? There's my seventy-five thousand acres of Central American real estate. All water."

"Well?"

"Well, so is the stock."

"Dick opened his mouth in amazement. "Do you really mean it?"

"Sure I do. You know my private opinion of the P.-A. Rubber Company. Fair exchange is no robbery. Won't trouble my sleep in the least."

"Then the next thing is to do it."

"In good time. As soon as we can get to a telegraph or cable office. Meanwhile——"

He stopped short and his jaw dropped. He turned to his companion. Amazement was depicted on their faces.

"What the——" began Jack.

"Another revolution, sure as shooting!" said Jack.

A great clamor sounded in the depth of the forest before them. There was a sound of horses breaking through the brush, shouts, rifle shots.

Leon, who had gone back to bring up additional duffle, came scurrying out of the woods, and went by without a word or backward look.

The two Americans ran to where their traps lay and picked up their rifles—blue-barreled thirty-thirties. When they turned to the woods again, they saw horsemen galloping toward them through the underbrush.

"Jack," Dick cried, "I'll be cow-kicked if there isn't——"

"We're crazy with the heat," said Jack. "It's a mirage. That kind doesn't grow down here."

"Yes, but there she is!"

"Does the one you see have yellow hair?"

"Sure she has—and if she isn't from home I'll eat baled hay!"

Then the riders came pounding upon them—three men and one girl with yellow hair.

CHAPTER II.

THE four riders pulled up as they came abreast of the Americans.

"What's up?" called Jack.

Before the strangers could answer, half a dozen pursuing horsemen appeared at the edge of the woods and fired a scattering volley in the general direction of the group in the open. Either their aim was poor, or their rifles worthless—or both. Anyhow, nobody was hurt.

Then Jack let out a blood-curdling yell. "Open on 'em, Dick!" he cried. He himself ran to the theodolite. Dick began to shoot. Jack ran forward with the instrument, spread wide its three iron-shod legs, squatted behind it, and gave the telescope a whirl.

With a yell, the enemy turned and fled amain. Jack stood up and emptied his rifle in their wake. Dick dropped on the ground and rolled over and over in an ecstasy of delight. Meanwhile the strangers looked from one to the other of them and then at each other with blank amazement in their eyes. Jack turned and lifted his hat, bowing low to the girl with the yellow hair.

"Yours to command," he said. "If we can be of any service to you."

He ignored the three men; indeed he hadn't even looked at them.

"Well, I should say you had already been of some service to us!" said the eldest of the men, a portly individual with grizzled hair and beard and a general air of prosperity and knowledge of affairs about him.

"What I want to know"—the girl spoke, in a soft voice with an undercurrent of laughter in it—"is what you are doing in this wilderness with a machine gun. Are you a revolution in embryo?"

"This, madam," said Jack, indicating the theodolite, "is not a Colt. Neither is it a Maxim. It is a Buff & Berger."

"And what, pray, may a 'Buff & Berger' be?"

"A Buff & Berger is a theodolite, an instrument for running precise levels and doing other engineering preliminaries. A Buff & Berger, I want you to know, is the thing in theodolites. Buff & Berger means to us what Paris means to you when you buy a hat."

The girl laughed. "And you bluffed those bloodthirsty bandits with th[illegible]" She turned to her companions. [illegible] papa! You should have turned on them with your thermos bottle!"

"Anyhow, we're much obliged," said the old gentleman, who had been looking at the theodolite with a meditative frown on his face, "and if there's anything we can do for you in return, don't hesitate to mention it. It was a close squeak for us. For a while I thought we were goners. They killed three of our native guides."

"Who are they?"

"Just a bunch of thieves, I presume—a wandering band of outlaws. They've been hanging on our heels for a week."

"Well, we're thankful to them for driving you to us," said Jack. "The sight of civilized folks, just the mere opportunity to look at human be[illegible] are all human, is worth [illegible] who[illegible] fellows who have been thr[illegible] from the cable."

"Especially when the w[illegible] days long like these we have [illegible] ing out here of late," said Dic[illegible]

The old gentleman took out a card and handed it to Jack.

"My name is Felix," he said. "Ephraim Felix of New York."

"And I am John Blanchard of the United States," said Jack. "But last from New York, also. And this is my friend, Richard O'Mahoney, also of the United States now, but originally from Ireland—for his health, I am inclined to think."

"Pleased to meet you gentlemen," said Mr. Felix. He turned to the girl. "[illegible]tlemen, this is my daughter, Ruth."

"To meet a fellow citizen in this wilderness is a thing to warm one's heart," said Jack, bowing to Miss Felix, "but when at the same time one meets also an American girl, Miss Felix, one is—well, one is——"

"All struck in a heap, that's all!" said Dick, seeing that Jack was stalled.

"Indeed, gentlemen, you can't be more pleased to see us than we are to see you. Imagine me traveling through this unutterable wilderness for a week without seeing a civilized being except papa and our two men there—and papa relapses into rankly profane barbarism when the mosquitoes are at their worst. Imagine me enduring a week of such hardships as traveling here entails—with robbers thrown in to trail us—and then you can get some faint idea of how

READERS will find two splendid new stories in this issue, "A RUBBER DEAL ROMANCE; or, WHAT HAPPENED IN HONDURAGUA," and a thrilling story for boys, "AEROPLANE BOY SCOUTS; or, IN WAR WRECKED BELGIUM." You will find them royal good reading. Next week's leading story will be a great romance of the South by Emma Howard Wight, entitled, "HIS NORTHERN WIFE; or, IN DAYS OF STRIFE." We strongly advise you to read it. A lot of other big, dramatic, gripping stories are coming.

glad I am to see two Americans armed with such an awe-inspiring implement as a Buff & Berger."

"Well, you would come," said her father. "I told you this was no trip for a girl."

The girl merely made a whimsical little grimace by way of answer.

"Well," continued the old gentleman, "guess we might as well camp down here. That is, if you have no objection, gentlemen? You seem to have possession."

"No objection at all," said Dick. "We're through with the place. You can have it."

"That is to say," said Jack, "we were through with the place a little while ago. Now, however, it's different. With the prospect of such congenial company, we become inclined to stay a while. Ten minutes ago we were eager to shake the dust of this place——"

"Mud," said Dick.

"The mud, then—to be nice and precise—of this place from our feet forever. Now, since you folks have come, I think we can bear with the scenery a little longer."

"It is sort of flat—this scenery," said Ruth, "but I do hope you can put up with it a little longer. It would be positively unkind for you to desert us now."

"Delighted to have you with us, gentlemen," added the old gentleman. "Join us and go back to the coast with us—that is if you are headed that way. We have finished our investigations and are about to return."

"Papa is inspecting rubber forests," said the girl.

"Oh!" said Dick.

"Indeed?" said Jack.

"Yes," said the old gentleman. Then, as though anxious to change the subject, "Will you join us, gentlemen?"

"Sure we will," said Jack and Dick, as with one voice.

CHAPTER III.

TWO days later, all haggard and hollow-eyed, the little party of Americans came to a halt on a knoll that commanded a stretch of rather open woodland. They were exhausted by sleepless and almost continued travel. The band of outlaws that had first followed the Felix party had, returned to the attack promptly after their repulse by Jack and his theodolite, and had pressed the fugitives so closely that they had been unable to rest more than an hour or two at a time. A half-dozen times Jack and Dick, with the aid of Leon and the two natives in the employ of Mr. Felix, had beaten off the marauders. As many times they had taken up the trail again.

"We've got to make a stand here," said Jack. "If we try to go any farther we shall all drop in our tracks."

"Farther, did you say?" said O'Mahoney. "I'm down in my tracks already. "And he sank in a heap where he stood and went to sleep instantly.

Mr. Felix slipped from his horse with a groan and moved heavily around to help Ruth down from her horse.

The girl was weary and worn, but her spirit was still unbroken. She even smiled a little—a tired sort of a smile—as she swung down from her saddle unaided.

"I'm not totally disabled yet, Daddie," she said.

"Well, I am," said her father. And he, too, subsided where he stood and promptly joined O'Mahoney in slumberland. The two native guides were asleep on their horses. Leon, who, with Jack and Dick, had covered most of the way on foot, with an occasional lift behind one of the horsemen, dropped his duffle bag and sat on it, turning his eyes, dumbly despairing, upon Jack.

"All right, Leon, go to sleep," said Jack. Then he turned to the girl.

"Well?" she said.

"Looks bad, eh?" he said.

"Does it?" She came close to him. "What do you really think about it?" she said.

"Want it straight?"

"Straight."

"Well, then, I think we must either wipe them out here, or—or be wiped out here."

"That's what I thought," said the girl. "Now, you go to sleep and let me watch."

"Couldn't think of it."

"You must. I've had a lot more sleep than any of you men, and I can watch as well as anybody—at least, as well as any man who has to lift his eyebrows to keep his eyes open."

"Well," Jack rubbed his eyes, "I am some sleepy. But first I must fix things. I figure that we have about two hours the start of them. Maybe I can snatch a little sleep. Are you sure you aren't too tired?"

"Sure. I've slept five hours in the last twenty-four, and you haven't slept one."

"All right." Jack seized the bridles of the two riderless horses. "Wake those sleeping retainers of yours and get them to the ground while I get these beasts out of the way."

Presently the four horses were all tethered in a deep clump of underbrush where they were effectually hidden. Then Jack came back and surveyed the ground with careful eye.

"We must drag all those slumberers into this little hollow," he said. Suiting the action to the word, he seized Dick unceremoniously by the shoulders and pulled him like a sack of grain into a sheltered depression on the summit of the knoll.

Thus, one by one, he drew the sleepers into the hollow that he had chosen as a citadel of last resort. The girl had to help him with the old gentleman, who snorted like an asthmatic porpoise during the transfer.

Then Jack examined all the rifles and saw that the magazines were full. Afterward he handed his own to the girl.

"Can you use it?" he asked.

Ruth examined the arm gingerly. "I'm afraid I can't get the hang of these hammerless things. I used to shoot Cousin Tom's flobert a little, but this is a mystery to me."

Jack ran his hand over the breech. "That little pin sticking up there means that it is cocked," he said. "This little catch here is the safety. Pull it this way, and the gun is ready to shoot. If you see anybody coming, shoot."

Then he took out his watch and laid it beside the girl. "When I have slept an hour," he said, "wake me up. You may have to be rough about it, for I'll be sleeping sixty miles an hour then, but if you shake hard enough, I'll come to."

"All right," said the girl. "I'll be as violent as needs be. And now go to sleep."

"Watch me."

Jack stretched out where he sat, and was asleep almost as soon as his head touched the earth.

An hour later the girl leaned over him and called, "Mr. Blanchard! Mr. Blanchard!"

Then she shook the sleeper, first gently, afterward violently. For some minutes he slumbered sweetly on, but as the shaking continued the alarm began to seep down through his drowsing brain. Finally he started, then leaped to his feet, wild-eyed, alert.

"Where are they?" he cried, clutching his rifle.

"A long way off, I hope," answered the girl. "This is just to remind you that you wanted to be awakened at the end of an hour. The hour is up."

"Hour? That measly wink an hour? Seems to me no more than a minute since I went to sleep." He shook himself disconsolately. "Oh, very well, if you say so." And he went about waking the others.

"When they were all on their feet, Jack took a blanket and threw it over a saddle, making a sort of couch, with the saddle for a pillow.

"Now, Miss Felix," he said. "Your turn. You'll have to take your sleep while we hold a council of war. You can't very well sleep after the fighting has begun."

The girl sank to the blanket with a sigh.

"Oh," she said. "I didn't know how tired I was!"

Jack fussed about her, trying hopelessly to make her more comfortable. Finally he spread a well-worn silk handkerchief over her face.

"Maybe that'll keep some of the flies off," he said. "Now sleep tight."

He turned to the men. "Well, gentlemen," he said, "now comes the last battle."

"Well," said Mr. Felix, "give your orders. You've pulled us through thus far, and we're counting on you to get us out of the woods if it can be done."

"It's up to you, Jack, my boy," said Dick. "You've had some experience in Central American insurrections, and we haven't. You'll have to handle this."

"Very well," said Jack. "We won't stand on ceremony, for minutes count. Dick, take your hatchet and cut some brush to mask the rim of this hollow. Mr. Felix, you'd better get out some victuals for the crowd and scout around the little ravine behind us for water. You," he turned to the three natives, "you three can help me build the fort."

In half an hour the knoll had been crudely, but pretty effectively, fortified. With sharpened sticks the defenders had thrown up a low breastwork, high enough to protect a man lying in the trench behind it. This they had masked with brush in such a way as to hide the rim of the work from observers from the outside without seriously obstructing the view of those who might shoot over the wall from within.

Then the old gentleman served dinner—ship's biscuit, potted meat, and coffee made from muddy water that he had brought from a little stream that ran through the ravine below—and after that the men drew upon their dwindling store of tobacco and smoked. The girl still slept. They had decided that she needed sleep more than food. Anyhow, she could eat after the fighting had begun, when it would be impossible for her to sleep any more.

"And have you mounted your machine gun, Jack?" said Dick, after they had all smoked a while in glum silence.

That started a laugh. The theodolite had failed signally at the second onset of the enemy, and had been abandoned fifty miles back.

"Alas, my poor Buff & Berger," said Jack. "It was not made to endure the rigors of war."

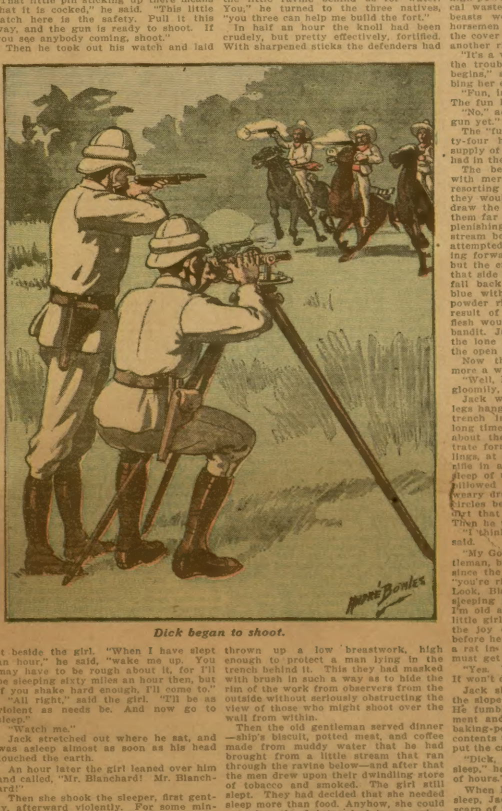
He knocked the ashes from his pipe and put it away. "Hope I'll live to smoke another day," he said. "I'm going to do a little scouting now. I've a hunch it's about time for the show to begin."

He took his rifle and crept along the edge of the knoll until he gained the deeper wood beyond. He was gone perhaps half an hour. Then he slipped silently back into the little redoubt.

"Well, men," he said, "they're here."

As he spoke they heard, distantly, the sound of horses breaking through the underbrush to the north and west. Peering through their leafy screen they could see dark forms moving from the deeper wood into the open grove that skirted the fortified knoll.

"We must make this first fire count," continued Jack. "I'll take the first man on the left. The rest of you take the others in order—Dick the second, and so on. And don't shoot until I do. I'll give the word."



Dick began to shoot.

The enemy advanced slowly—about a score of evil-looking, swart customers, mounted indiscriminately on horses and jackasses, and armed with a melange of old weapons, mostly Remingtons.

"They're mere robbers now," whispered Dick, "but if they get away with this and get these good thirty-thirties, they'll blossom out into a full-fledged insurrection."

When the front rank of the band was about fifty yards from the crest of the knoll, Jack lifted his rifle and drew a bead on his man. "All ready," he said. "Fire!"

The heavy detonation of half a dozen high-power rifles rang through the tropical waste, and three of the advancing beasts were riderless. The remaining horsemen wheeled and galloped back to the cover of the woods. Jack picked off another rider as they fled.

"It's a wonder you folks wouldn't take the trouble to wake me when the fun begins," said Ruth, sitting up and rubbing her eyes.

"Fun, is it?" said Dick. "Go to sleep. The fun hasn't begun."

"No," added Jack, "the 'fun' hasn't begun yet."

The "fun" began in dead earnest twenty-four hours later when the meager supply of water the defenders of the fort had in their canteens ran out.

The besieging force contented itself with merely surrounding the knoll and resorting to waiting tactics. Try as they would, the defenders could neither draw the enemy into the open nor keep them far enough aloof to permit the replenishing of the water supply from the stream below. Once Jack and Dick had attempted to reach the water, Dick creeping forward under cover of Jack's rifle, but the enemy had gathered in force on that side of the fort, and forced Dick to fall back in haste, leaving the woods blue with the smoke from the black-powder rifles of his pursuers. The net result of the sortie had been a slight flesh wound in Dick's leg and one dead bandit. Jack's unerring rifle had plugged the lone native who had ventured into the open in the heat of the chase.

Now the struggle had become once more a waiting game.

"Well, Mr. Blanchard," said Mr. Felix, gloomily, "what do you think?"

Jack was sitting dejectedly with his legs hanging over the scarp of the little trench inside the breastwork. For a long time he did not answer. He looked about the little inclosure, at the prostrate forms of Leon and the Felix hirelings, at Dick, meditatively cleaning his rifle in a corner, at Ruth, sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion with her head pillowed on a saddle. He noted the weary droop of her sweet lips, the dark circles beneath her eyes, the grime and dirt that blackened her slender fingers. Then he turned to Mr. Felix.

"I think something must be done," he said.

"My God, Blanchard," said the old gentleman, breaking down for the first time since the beginning of the weary chase, "you're right! Something must be done. Look, Blanchard." He pointed to the sleeping girl. "I don't care for myself. I'm old and I've had my fling. But my little girl is young and full of hope and the joy of living. She has everything before her. She simply must not die like a rat in this reeking tropical hole. We must get her out somehow."

"Yes. We must get her out some way. It won't do for her to die."

Jack shook himself and moved down the slope to where the duffle was piled. He fumbled in a ruck-sack for a moment and brought thence a half-empty baking-powder can. He emptied the contents thereof into a piece of paper and put the can into his pocket.

"Dick, you and Felix are due for a sleep," he said. "I'll watch for a couple of hours."

When Dick and Mr. Felix had gone to sleep, Jack seated himself again on the scarp of the trench, where he could command a view of the approach of the fort through the leaves of the screen. Then he took the empty baking-powder can from his pocket and inspected it long and thoughtfully. After a while he returned to the duffle bag and took thence a little earthenware jar labeled "Orange Marmalade."

"I'll never rail at Richard's taste for English marmalade again," he said to himself.

Then he took also a box of long, wicked-looking cartridges, and a little case containing a few tools for gun-repairing in the field, and returned to his vigil.

"What are you doing?" asked Ruth, presently. "I've been watching you ever since I woke up five minutes ago, and I'm consumed with curiosity to know what you are up to. The ruling passion is strong, even in death—or at least in the face of it." And she laughed a bitter little laugh.

"You just watch me," said Jack. "And you might help me a little, too, after a bit."

The girl rose and moved to his side.

"Sit down and watch the process," he said.

The conclusion of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

Kate of the Lilac Sox

Or, Fighting for the Pennant

By Arthur Chapman

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CHAPTER IV.

"IS THIS here Miss Weston, manager of the Rockhavens?"

Kate looked up from her desk in the office she had hired for the transaction of the Rockhaven team's affairs. She almost had to look twice before she got a glimpse of a freckled face, surmounting the longest and lankiest body she had ever seen.

"I'm Slats Dewey," said the tall boy, whose huge wrist-bones protruded many inches through his short coat sleeves. "I was pitchin' fer the Cherry Valley team last season, and your scout, Fox Kelly, seen me and signed me up. He realized my value right off, Fox Kelly did, and told me to report at the beginnin' of the season, so here I am."

"You're the first to arrive," said Kate, heartily, as she shook hands with the giant. "Have you kept in good condition all winter?"

"You bet," said Slats. "I've fixed up a gymnasium in our barn, and I'm harder 'n two kegs o' nails. I'm goin' to pitch the game of my life for this here team of yourn this season."

"That's the first time that 'game of my life' thing has been sprung on me," thought Kate. "Probably I'll hear it a good many times from now on."

She directed Slats to the hotel where he would find Kelly, and turned with renewed interest to her work. With the drifting in of the first recruit, it seemed that the season's campaign was on in earnest.

The others followed Slats in swift succession—the young and eager recruits coming first, then the new men who had been signed, and lastly the regulars. Even these veterans were a little earlier than usual, for they had a natural curiosity about seeing the new manager of the Rockhavens.

Kate had put in a busy three months from the time of the annual meeting of the league. The local press had commented pro and con upon the trades she had engineered, but the sporting writers had finally agreed that the standing of the Rockhaven team could not be hurt any, and that the new manager should be given a chance to prove the soundness of her baseball judgment. Advice in plenty was showered on Kate by dozens of individuals who thought they had the baseball managerial instinct. In fact, Kate came to the conclusion that the number of people who know how to run newspapers is small in comparison with the number of people that can run baseball teams to perfection. She paid some attention to this advice at first, but Wallace, whose consultations regarding the legal aspects of the team's affairs were daily matters, soon convinced her that she should place no reliance on volunteered expert opinion.

Among the thousand-and-one details which demanded attention was the question of team uniforms. When it came to a selection of colors, Kate's feminine instinct rebelled at the gray stockings, caps, and suit trimmings, which had been the color of the Rockhaven team during the thirteen years of Jared Slosson's managership. She decided that some other color must be chosen—something aside from the ordinary blues, reds, or browns that make up the average ball team's decoration. So she hit on her favorite color, lilac. When she told one of the reporters for the local press of the change in the Rockhaven colors, that young man, being possessed of an abnormally sharpened news instinct, realized the value of the story at once. He wrote an article, under this heading:

HAIL TO THE LILAC SOX,
ESTHETES OF THE DIAMOND!
New Colors of the Rockhaven Team, as
Chosen by Our Lady Manager, Show
That We Are the Highbrow Hub
of the Baseball Universe—
Rumor of Lilac-Bordered
Handkerchiefs Untrue.

Kate laughed at the clever story that followed, but she was appalled at the avalanche of press clippings and newspaper interviewers which came in its train. The metropolitan Sunday editors telegraphed to the local correspondents for pictures and stories about the lady manager of the Lilac Sox. Requests for stories on the manager's taste for lilac color were sent, and marked copies of papers and magazines began to drift in, crediting Kate with most remarkable views on the luck and beauty of lilac.

At first Kate was annoyed, but she soon realized that the advertisement for her team would mean a great deal, so she told the reporters to write what they pleased on the lilac question. She became known as the "Lilac Manager." A New York bandmaster composed a set of "Lilac Waltzes" which became popular. An enterprising silk manufacturer put out a shade of silk which he called "Kate lilac." Women all over the country chose this as the color scheme of their gowns, and, before her team had played a game, Kate found herself the most advertised manager in baseball. She received several offers to appear in vaudeville, and to help manage more important teams in larger leagues, but to all these she was deaf.

"You certainly have made a sensation with this lilac business," said Wallace. "Do you know, I even had a 'Kate lilac' necktie shoved at me today in a store. I bought it, too, and am going to wear it at the opening game."

"Fox Kelly was not so willing to have lilac thrust upon him," said Kate.

"How was that?"

"Well, he came in the other day with a long face and said: 'Wot's all this I hear about us wearing lilac sox?'

"'It's true,' I told him. 'The terrible rumor is true.'

"'The boys'll never stand for it,' said Fox. 'With me it's different, of course,' he added, 'but I've talked it over with some of the others, and they're ag'in' such a fancy color.'

"'Fine for them,' I said. 'You go back and tell them, Fox, to get up a genuine, bona fide strike over the lilac sox question, and I'll be delighted. It will make the best kind of advertising for the club. When you get the strike organized, let me know, and I'll tell the sporting editors about the walkout.'

"Well, Fox looked at me for half a minute, without blinking, he was so astonished, and then he went out, shaking his head, and I've heard nothing more about the strike. In fact, the team's lilac-trimmed uniforms came today and were tried on, and more effective-looking creations, confections, and all such things you never saw. Not having a red-headed player on the team, the color combination is first-rate."

"Well, it's lucky there is no descendant of that red-haired, romantic Rudolf Rassendyll playing ball around here for a living," said Wallace. "He'd have to be a Cobb-Johnson-Lajoie-Wagner composite to intrude his red head into the color scheme at our ball park."

"Yes, and besides all that he'd have to have other good playing qualities," agreed Kate. "Everything's got to jibe with the lilac around here this season."

With the first warm days of late March, Kate was out at the ball park every morning watching the practice of the Lilac Sox. The recruits reported to her as fast as they arrived in town. For two weeks there was a steady procession of young men to her office—tall young men, short young men and fat and lean young men—but all afire with enthusiasm to play ball, and every one of them seeking advance money. It was the general rule of the teams in the league to pay the expenses of the recruits during practice season. The contracts of the regulars did not begin until the start of the season, so their board was paid also while they were getting in condition. Two or three of the older players, upon whom had devolved the nursery work, were paid extra for their service in coaching the younglings. Kate ventured few suggestions, because she felt that the actual work of getting the players in form could best be intrusted to Kelly and the other veterans, but she watched the work of every player with the keenest interest.

At first she was keenly disappointed in the men who reported for duty. Having no knowledge of baseball, outside of her observations from the grand stand, she had never thought of a player except as a sort of athletic demigod in appearance, always clad in the uniform of the diamond, and never being anything but dashing and graceful. Consequently, the first few athletes who appeared in their "store" clothes, gave Kate a severe shock. These prosaic-looking individuals, who seized so eagerly upon advance money, from ten dollars to a hundred, and who generally sent at least half of the cash away to wives or mothers or sisters, did not look like demigods. Nor was their talk godlike, being chiefly concerned with the high cost of living and the reasons why each one should have an advance in salary this year.

"Well, you know Jared Slosson never would consent to break over the salary limit," Kate would tell each one of them. "He could have won the pennant in this league a dozen times straight if he had chosen to make the blue sky the financial limit. But he played the game fairly, and never spent a dollar above the amount agreed on as each club's salary limit. That's going to be my rule, too. If we can't win and stay under the salary limit, then we're going to make our permanent quarters right down in the cellar where we are today. Besides, it's no time to talk about boosting salaries at the beginning of the season. When the summer's work is done, and the Rockhavens are where they ought to be on the ladder—that's the time to come with your more-money talk."

This hint that there would be a reward for a better club standing was not slow in spreading among the men. When once they had donned their uniforms and had forgotten the troubles of winter, and had progressed to that stage of enthusiasm where they preferred sitting about the "fan" headquarters and talking baseball rather than going to moving-picture shows, Kate heard no more rumblings of discontent.

The recruits that had turned up for practice averaged as well as any minor league manager could expect. But let it not be supposed that any great amount of talent comes marching in through the minor league ball park gates in the spring.

"Somehow I'm awfully discouraged about the showing of the cubs, Fox," said Kate to Kelly, remembering a dispiriting morning's practice, during which the glaring deficiencies of half a dozen young players had impressed her strongly. "It looks to me as if you'll have to let at least fifty per cent of them go back to the farms."

"You mean ninety per cent," snorted Fox. "When you've had as much experience as I have in the ways of these cubs, you'll think ten per cent of passable ball players out of a seineful of the mutts is a good average. You can't judge a ball player very well when he's cavortin' around among a lot of dubs in overalls. He looks like a world-beater then, and you sign him. He shows up for spring practice, and the first day or two, when he's all keyed up, he pulls some pretty good work. Then somebody rubs him the wrong way, and he gets sore and begins to boot the ball. Or, one wild pitch, if he happens to be a twirler, starts him on a streak, and he can't keep from throwing the ball over the grand stand to save his fool life. One after another, you have to drop the whole lot. One has a bad temper, and another one has a streak of yeller, and that's the way your squad narrows and narrows, until at last out of fifteen or twenty ambitious and husky lads you find you're lucky if you get one or two that'll stick with your outfit all season. There ain't another business in the world as discouraging as scouting for and developing young baseball players, Miss Weston."

"By the way, where's that awfully tall young man—Slats Dewey?" asked Kate, remembering that for a day or two she had not seen the lathlike form of the young giant who had been the first player to report.

"Slats has went back to the farm at Cherry Valley," said Fox. "I could hear the cows grieving for him, and it was a shame to keep them animals bawling so. When I told him he could hit for the home ranch, for all the Rockhaven team was concerned, Slats wept big tears, and said he was coming down to see you and have me fired. But I guess he thought better of it, and walked right on to Cherry Valley, like I told him to. With them legs of his, he could get there before chore time in the evening."

"Poor boy!" said Kate. "That's the hardest thing about this managing business, I'm afraid—letting out young players."

"It ain't half so hard as giving a release to an old player like me, Miss Weston, that's seen his day and has to be fired for the good of the club. The trouble with all of us players is that we don't realize when we're through. Some one else always has to tell us, and it hurts, it hurts!"

"I know, Mr. Kelly," said Kate. "It's too painful to think about. But about these young players. Is there any one that's showing particularly well?"

Fox's eyes lit up with ill-concealed pleasure and excitement. Evidently he had been saving some stirring information for a favorable moment.

"You wasn't out to the park this afternoon to see the practice, was you?" he inquired.

"No," said Kate. "I missed the second workout today."

"Well, you'd have been in at the christening of a real ball player if you'd have been there," said the Fox. "I was going to save it, and let you see for yourself tomorrow, but it's too good to keep. You know old Kaiser Bill Krieg brought his young brother along with him for a try-out?"

"Yes," said Kate, who remembered shaking hands with the slender, boyish brother of the big, good-natured German pitcher, Wilhelm Krieg, usually called "Kaiser Bill."

"Well, generally I don't bank much on that brother stuff, but I know old Kaiser Bill Krieg's a modest, quiet fellow who never says anything he don't mean right down in his heart, so I knew there must be something to this kid brother of his. I told him to fetch the kid along for a try-out this spring, but I didn't have any idea that he was going to fetch along the biggest diamond in the baseball mine and make us a present of it. I give this kid Johnnie a work-out myself, and he handled everything I shot in, just as graceful as anything you ever saw in your life. Then I got downright interested, and had Kaiser Bill get out and do some real pitching to the kid, while a few of us batted. Behind the bat, that boy beats anything I have ever seen. He's got a wing like one of them Roc birds in the Arabian Nights. He shoots the ball to second like a steel-jacketed bullet. He's just a bit slow getting the ball away from him, but that's something I'll correct before the season's started. When the ball does go, it travels as straight as a searchlight beam. I've been playing ball for twenty-three years, and I've never seen a kid like Kaiser Bill's brother, Miss Kate, I give you my word. The catching problem is settled, rest assured of that, and by a kid whose hands are as slim as your own, almost. When I first begun pitching to him, I thought I'd bust them hands, but he never drops a thing. It's the accurate eye he's got. They tell me he's a wonder with the pool balls, too. It's because he judges things to the fraction of an inch, as he does in pool, that he don't need the muscle us big blunderbusses have to spring in order to get by. His game is all science, while ours is main strength. I'm so excited about this find Kaiser Bill's brought to us that I know I ain't going to sleep tonight. The kid's contract is all right, ain't it—all signed, I mean? If it ain't, his name ought to be secured on paper in the next twenty minutes, for the stuff he sprung at the ball park today's going to get to the ears of some big league manager and you'll lose the prize of the year."

"Yes, he's signed, and I believe his salary is to be seventy-five dollars a month if he makes good."

"For Heaven's sake give the kid a hundred at the start!" said Fox. "You're going to be able to sell him for the draft price at the end of the season, sure. With him behind the bat, and that sweet young pitcher, Watkins, to help me and Kaiser Bill, you needn't worry much about the spots fore and aft of the plate."

"How about Delehanty at first?" asked Kate. "He's going to do, isn't he?"

Old Fox looked dubious, for he was a Jarecki admirer.

"That ain't for me to say," he growled. "At least it ain't for me to say just yet. Delehanty's fast on his feet, and probably he'll be all right to fit in with a swift-fielding team of the sort you say you want to build up. But he only batted .260 in the Badger-Wolverine League last season, and that's likely to mean below .250 with us. I'm working hard to change his swing, and I will say he takes advice well. But for me, I prefer old Jarecki, with the war club that's good for seven homers a year as a minimum. A heavy-hitting team is my ideal, though I don't know everything about baseball—not everything."

"Neither do I," said Kate with a smile, recalling the many set-tos she had with Kelly on this subject of defense versus offense in baseball. "There's plenty to say on your side, but I want to give my views a trial. When the Rockhaven team trots out on the diamond, just four days and three hours and twenty minutes from now, the 'fans' aren't going to recognize it, are they?"

"That they won't," said Kelly, "and let's hope they won't recognize its standing at the end of the season, either."

CHAPTER V.

KATE'S recollection of opening day was confused. She remembered that there was a procession, before the game, and that an enthusiastic committee of local "fans" had provided a lilac-decorated automobile for her, which had run the gauntlet of many cameras and a moving-picture machine. Also she remembered there was a band, and much cheering, and the biggest crowd the Rockhaven grounds had ever known. Bleachers and grand stand overflowed with humanity, and there were masses of people on both sides of the diamond, while automobiles made a deep and respectable fringe about the outfield and caused the establishment of ground rules, which eliminated all home runs save those which were driven over the fence.

Edward Wallace, visibly excited in spite of his lawyer-like efforts to remain calm, was among the first of those who congratulated Kate.

"There's the biggest lot of outsiders, as well as home folks, these turnstiles ever clicked off," said Wallace. As secretary of the club, to which position he had been appointed by Kate, Wallace was delighted at the financial returns of the day.

"Look at those dusty automobiles mixed in with the shiny machines of the town folks," he went on. "That means you've got people coming from all the country towns around here. The new-fangled farmer can do a pretty good day's spring plowing and then hop into his car that's been running the buzz-saw at the woodpile, and get to town in time to see a game of ball."

"Well, it's back to the soil for me, auto or no auto, if this aggregation of lilac-trimmed wooden Indians doesn't win a little better than two-thirds of its games this season," said Kate. "Some way they didn't look to me at morning practice as if there was a thimbleful of real baseball talent in the whole bunch, and they look worse now. I'd like to retreat ingloriously out of the side gate, if it wasn't for the moral effect."

"You've worried about shaping the team till you're sick and disgusted," said Wallace. "It's perfectly natural. But wait until your bunch goes into action against this outfit from Ossoway."

Just then the gong rang, and the lilac bunch did go into action. The first lilac-hosed player, plainly a nervous wreck, advanced to the plate, bat in hand, while the black-clad Ossoways, winner of last season's pennant, dashed into the field, confident and jaunty. Wilson of the Ossoways, smarting under the sense of defeat at Kate's hands in the trading at the annual meeting, was more than eager to win this opening game. He had sent in his best battery, and his parting words were:

"Beat those Lilac Sox today, or the hotel bus won't wait for you after the game."

It would be a pleasure to chronicle the humbling of the Ossoway manager and players, and of the brilliant work on the part of the Rockhavens which sent the crowd home loud in its praises of the Lilac Sox. But there is no such chronicling to be done. The Lilac Sox could not have played any worse if they had severally subscribed to an agreement to hand the game to the Ossoways. Old Fox Kelly had elected to pitch young Watkins, and at the last minute had feared to put young Krieg behind the bat, but, instead, had called on Brown to don the mask and windpad. Brown was disgruntled at the praise which had been showered on Krieg during practice. Watkins had an attack of nervousness in the first inning, and the harsh language he heard from his catcher during their frequent consultations between the home plate and the pitcher's mound only served to send him higher in the air. He passed four men to base, forcing in a run, and cracked two of the Ossoways in the ribs—one of them consuming ten minutes of valuable time before he considered himself fit to take his place on first.

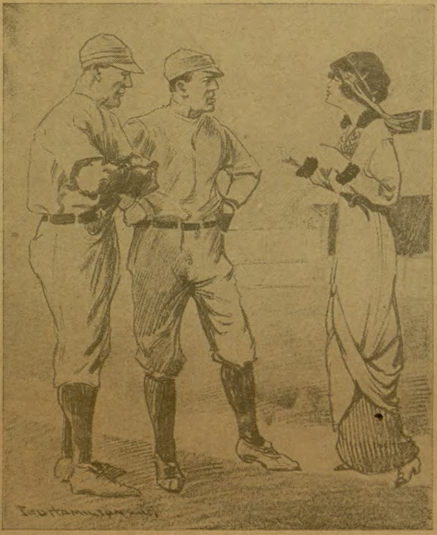
As the local reporters agreed, the game "degenerated into a farce in the first inning." "To the average observer," said one paper, "the poles could not be farther apart than the Ossoways and the Rockhavens when it came to class. The Rockhavens seemed to have little, while the Ossoways had everything. The visitors batted and ran bases like demons, while the Rockhavens acted like plaster statues at the bat. To say that the crowd was disappointed was putting it mildly. Those who had come to root for the Lilac Sox remained to jeer. The Ossoways were applauded liberally for every good play, while the home team was hissed on more than one occasion. The score, twelve to one, shows how farcical the game became. The one run of the Lilac Sox was a present in the last inning, when Meyers, the Ossoways' brilliant pitcher, perceptibly slackened his speed. We hesitate to plunge into prophecy, but it looks like another bad year for the home fans."

Kate sat in the grand stand, a spot of color burning in each cheek, but otherwise seemingly unconscious of the disfavor into which her team had fallen with the crowd. Several leather-lunged fans megaphoned the information to her that the Rockhavens were worse than ever. Jarecki's adherents from the factory district sent up a war cry for the return of their favorite.

"We want Jarecki! We want Jarecki!" they chanted, and they hurled so many insulting remarks at young Delehanty, that the youthful first baseman, playing his second season in organized baseball, was more than once openly restrained by Fox Kelly from jumping into the crowd near first base and punching several heads.

Kate made her way to the bench at the close of the unfortunate game, and found scowls on every brow, as the players put away their bats.

"Boys, this is no way to look," she said pleasantly. "Today's game is part of yesterday's seven thousand years. I read that in a gift book on the Christmas bargain counter last year, and it is the only way to look at this kind of a day. I haven't lost a bit of faith in you, boys. You did a dozen clever or brilliant things that the crowd didn't notice. Remember, it will only take tomorrow's game to put us on even footing with the Ossoways, and then we can take the rest of the series. We'll have every one of these Roaring Willies in the bleachers wanting to put his name in our friendship book before the season's two weeks old. Today we just got a bad start, and everybody was nervous, including your manager."



"Boys, this is no way to look!"

The men looked at Kate in frank astonishment.

"Well, Miss Weston, you're all right!" finally growled Brown, whose bad temper had been one of the chief causes of the Lilac Sox defeat. "I'm frank to say right now that I had a grouch, and I ought to be fined twenty-five dollars for springing my bad temper on the team. But tomorrow we'll make you forget this day, Miss Weston."

"You bet we will!" chorused several of the players, and the frowns cleared away and the Lilac Sox trotted for their waiting automobiles like winners instead of like disgraced losers.

"That's a pretty spry-looking bunch for a team that got what yours did today," said Wilson of the Ossoways, at Kate's elbow.

Wilson had never forgiven Kate for the way she engineered her trades at the annual meeting. The story of her trading at the expense of the leading managers in the league had gone the rounds of the press on the circuit, and had brought a good deal of newspaper raillery the way of the magnates who had figured at the short end of the dealing. Wilson had insisted that he had made his team better than ever, but he was of the type that cannot stand joking in the press, and secretly he was furious at Kate because she had made him ridiculous. Now that his team had won the opening battle in such hollow fashion, Wilson could not resist showing his glee in Kate's presence.

"You just couldn't resist the temptation to come and have a gloat at my expense, could you, Mr. Wilson?" said Kate. "Well, gloat while the gloating is good. It's the last chance you are going to have this season. If it were not for the fact that I confine my betting to the annual meetings of the league, I'd double the wager we now have as to the standing of our teams when the season ends."

Wilson tried to think up something utterly crushing to say, but for once his ready tongue was slow. Besides, it is not easy to shout something crushing after a young woman who has turned her back and is moving away rapidly. Wilson merely looked after Kate and tried to smile sardonically, but he did not make much of a success of it, for the reason that, in spite of the ridicule she had brought upon him, he was much in love with her, though he would not admit the fact to himself. But Wilson's nature was one of those that consider pride first and love afterward. His pride had been hurt, and he was going to balance matters with Kate Weston, even if it put an end to the only romantic thoughts he had ever entertained.

Next day the Rockhavens, before a small but select audience, won a dazzling game from the Ossoways, by the comfortable score of six to three. At morning practice Brown had come to Fox Kelly with the request that young Krieg be allowed to catch.

"The kid's anxious to get in the game with his brother, Kaiser Bill," said Brown to the astonished Kelly, "so it ain't any more than right that he should have the chance."

So the handful of spectators saw the Krieg brothers play their first professional game together. "Kaiser Bill," in spite of warning calls from Kelly on the coaching line, worked at midseason speed, and no pitcher on the circuit had a ball that winged faster than the big fellow's when he bent to his work. His slender brother gave a flawless exhibition behind the bat. The few Ossoways who got on base attempted to steal on the young recruit catcher, but were thrown out by yards at every trial. Two or three foul balls were picked off the grand stand screen by the youngster, and the only time the attention of the crowd was diverted from the youth in the catcher's mask was when Delehanty, the much-hooted successor of the slow-footed Jarecki, leaped high in the air and made a catch that gave the crowd one of those electric sensations which testify to the "punch" in baseball.

The word was passed around that there must have been some mistake in the town's first judgment of the Rockhaven baseball team. The sporting editors gave praise even more enthusiastically than they had spouted condemnation at the opening game. The most savage disparagers of the team on the first day came out to see the third game just to have their opinions upheld, but again the Rockhavens beat the Ossoways, this time by a four to three score in eleven innings. Watkins had asked to be allowed to go in again, and Brown had requested to be allowed to catch for him. The battery whose combined ill-temper and nervousness had done so much to lose the first game, worked with beautiful precision in the third. Not once was a consultation necessary, and not once did Watkins show any sign of unsteadiness, even when the Ossoway coachers were harrying him the hardest. In the eleventh, with one man on base, he struck out the next two, and it was his clever waiting for a base on balls, coupled with a hard drive for extra bases by Brown, that won the game for the Lilac Sox. The fourth game of the series was taken by the Ossoways, but their margin was only one run. Again the sprightly Delehanty silenced the shouters for Jarecki by executing three lightning-like plays. Though he struck out twice, his one hit drove in two runs. Moran, the new center-fielder, caught two Ossoways at the plate with long throws from the fence, and three double plays which were started by Adkins and Sessions at shortstop and second respectively, brought cheers from the crowd, which was nearly of holiday proportions.

"Defense—that's where we're going to get 'em," said the delighted Wallace to Kate. "This town hasn't known what real fielding has meant, except when some visiting team sprung a little of it. We're not going to harvest as many home runs as Jarecki and the rest of his hard-swiping bunch, but we're going to make it mighty hard for any other team to fight all the way around those base lines. With a fair share of the breaks at the bat, nothing can stop us from heading the league by the Fourth of July."

But the Fourth of July, which is popularly supposed to represent the crest of the average ball team's fortunes, found the Lilac Sox far from first place. They were in fifth, fighting the New Rochelles hard for fourth place, it is true, but still outside the charmed first division. The team had hit fairly well, which was all Kate had expected, and its fielding had been the talk of the circuit, but the breaks of luck, as Wallace explained it, had all been with the other teams. In addition, Kelly's arm had been slow in getting in shape. The old pitcher had done his daily stint on the coaching lines and in teaching all his tricks to the youngsters during morning practice, but so far as helping the club out of a tight place, he had done absolutely nothing. Kate refused to allow him to pitch until he could assure her on oath that his arm was in first-class condition, and Kelly, the soul of honesty, could make no such affidavit until well into July.

"I thought it was the soup kettle for the old soup bone," he said one day, "but it's no such thing, after all, Miss Weston. Old Kelly, the Fox, wants to get into the game today, and he wants to pitch it all. The sun has fairly penetrated this rhinoceros hide of mine, and I felt the last touch of frost leavin' my elbow today."

So Fox Kelly went in and won his game, and a game on the third day after that, but, such being the unstable nature of baseball fortune, the accession of a winning pitcher was counterbalanced by the loss of young Watkins, who thoughtlessly and ungratefully drank in several thousand typhoid germs with some drinking water at one of the many hotels whose ice-water cooler was a convention-place of bacteria. With the removal of Watkins to the hospital, Brown seemed to go to pieces. A strange attachment had sprung up between the veteran catcher and the young pitcher, who had fallen out so disastrously on the first day of the season. Not since that day had Brown chided Watkins. He spent hours in teaching the young pitcher control, and, now that his team mate was out of the game, probably for the rest of the season, Brown seemed to lose interest in everything else. He quarreled lustily with Krieg and Kelly, and finally Fox took Brown out in the middle of a game, and Krieg from that moment became the team's first-string catcher.

Watkins' loss discouraged Kate. Apparently there was no hope of being able to fill his place. "Kaiser Bill" Krieg and Kelly were in condition, but there was need for at least one more good pitcher to help them out. The club dropped from fifth to sixth place, and there was murmuring on the part of the sporting editors at home.

"Last Place in Sight—Don't It Look Natural?" was the ungrammatical but significant heading on one of the baseball accounts.

By the tenth of July it looked as if Kate's chances for a championship and a fortune were dwindled to a hopeless stage, when she received a telegram which read:

"Billings, Mont., July 10.

"Miss Kate Weston, Manager Rockhaven Baseball Team: Have taken the liberty of sending you, railroad fare prepaid, finest specimen of pitching talent ever developed among the aborigines. His name is Wahpootka Naks, which means Young Otter, and he is a Crow Indian. He has been striking out from ten to twenty in every game in this locality. Give him a try-out, but no whisky. If he falls down I will advance his railroad fare home.

"Your affectionate cousin,
"SETH SLADE."

Hardly had Kate finished reading the telegram from the Western cousin who had been present at the reading of Jared Slosson's peculiar will, when young Wallace came in with an Indian youth, fashionably dressed, who introduced himself as John Jones.

"But I was looking for an Indian named Young Otter," said Kate, puzzled.

"Oh, that's merely my tribal name," said the sophisticated red youth, looking a bit bored. "I prefer the name that was given me at my baptism by the missionary who lives near the agency. Now, if you will be so kind as to tell me where I may find the quarters of the team and remove the stains of travel from my person, I shall be glad to converse with you on baseball matters and see what can be done about bettering the standing of your team."

"Well," gasped Kate, seizing the young Indian's hand, "I will frankly confess that I was disappointed in your appearance, young Mr. John Jones, but if you can control the ball half as well as you cut the plate with your English, you are going to do. Report to Fox Kelly at the hotel, and tell him to give you some practice as soon as possible. We'll waive all talk formalities. You're slated to pitch tomorrow. We need you."

CHAPTER VI.

HERE'S where I, Jared Slosson, come in. Of course I'm supposed to be dead, but I'm still hearing birds sing every morning. They're good American birds, too—meadow larks up on the Montana plains, the birds that make the sweetest, most liquid music in the world, I think. But before I come to these warblers, I've got to tell my reasons for letting the people of Rockhaven think I died in China, and for saddling my niece, Kate Weston, with that Rockhaven baseball team. It wasn't on account of any financial difficulties. That's the first suspicion that always pops into the head of every mother's son of us when some one keeps under cover through a death ruse or any other kind of a pretense.

It was all on account of that Rockhaven baseball team. There I'd been managing that team for thirteen years, and wanting nothing better than to win a pennant just once, but I couldn't derrick the team out of last place if Colonel Goethals had let me take all the lifting machinery on his little canal. It took thirteen years to convince me that I was not a success as a manager, but when I took a good look at the team and myself at the end of the thirteenth season, I was willing to admit that any printer was entitled to put a cap F in front of the word when he classed me as a failure.

It took me a long time to figure out just where to toss my mantle of fame as the worst manager in captivity. There were dozens of professionals who wanted the chance. Just let me drop a hint that a new manager for the Rockhavens was desired, and I'd have had a swarm of retired big leaguers buzzing about me in no time. But I had seen enough of those fellows tried out. You can't run a minor league team with big league methods, any more than you can run a country newspaper along New York Sun lines. It calls for a different sort of savvy, that's all.

I knew there was no use letting my attorneys, Schoonover & Schoonover, run the team. I could see just the expression of horror that would settle on the faces of those two dear old men when they found that their trusted friend, Jared Slosson, had given them a white elephant to manage. Also, I could see just what they would do to the team. They would never hire a player unless he could furnish a law-school sheepskin. They would insist that all arguments with the umpire be couched in the language of Blackstone, and they would spend so much time tying red tape around the popcorn and soda-pop contracts that they never would have time to go out to the grounds to see how the team was playing.

I don't know how the idea of Kate Slosson came to me, unless it was when I read an item in one of the local papers to the effect that Kate had been promoted to the head of the pattern department at Blankenbuhler's. Well, I thought if Kate was a bright enough girl to get ahead in the department store business that way, I'd better drop around and take a look at her. I was a little ashamed because I hadn't anything for Kate, inasmuch as she was my only niece. But as a matter of fact, she always fended off any offers of help, as I remembered, and acted as if she preferred to travel along her own independent course, which sentiment I admired her for.

I knew that, among my other relatives, there was no use in looking to my cousins, Almira and Annabel Slosson, for help. They live down in Dolby Center, and are the kind of old maids that have so much acid in their dispositions that a lemon, straight, tastes sweet to them. I wanted to keep the team in the family if possible, but I couldn't see Almira and Annabel making a success of it. Would they ever praise a player for making a ten-foot slide through the mud with the winning run? Not in what the poet calls a cycle in a cafe. They'd toast the base runner till he smoked, all because he'd provided extra laundry expense.

So, with Kate in my mind, I dropped in at Blankenbuhler's, and the floorwalker told me that Miss Weston was chauffeuring the pattern department. I guess I never would have gone on with my quest for a manager if he had said the corset department. I strolled around by the pattern counter and spent three or four minutes watching Kate wait on customers, and the more I saw her keeping those fussy women good-natured and giving them just what they thought they wanted, the more I made up my mind that Kate was the girl to be the next manager of the Rockhaven team. I knew she had some knowledge of baseball, for I'd seen her out at the grounds several times, and it hasn't been difficult during the last few years to distinguish any one in the grand stand, the crowds have been so slim. Nobody ever got lost in the human surge at the baseball park when my cellar champions were performing.

I must have lost myself in thought for a few minutes, for I was roused by Kate asking what she could do for me. I bought five or six patterns—the first bunch I saw in a book in front of me—and I'm not sure that some of 'em were not for children's clothes. But Kate never let on that she was interested, and, after she'd sent the package to be wrapped and delivered, I asked her a few fool questions about her work and whether she liked it, and then was glad to engineer a retreat that wasn't graceful enough to be quoted in any book of strategy as a model.

But the more I thought of Kate Weston and her ways, the more I liked her. I liked the ring of business in her voice, and I could see that she was going to walk up through those other clerks in that store like a real racer going through a bunch of Mr. Neverwin's goats at the backstretch.

It wasn't going to do for me to stay home and let Kate manage the team. I didn't care about what people might say—that I was getting mushy over my good-looking niece and all that. It was the fear that I'd be butting in all the time and not letting the girl have free rein in running the team. I knew I just couldn't keep my hands off if I got within reaching distance of those reins. I'd be shoving the whole team down in the eight-hole as usual, and keeping it there.

Then the idea came into my head of going abroad and staying there for a whole year. But I figured that if Kate or any other manager knew I was only halfway around the earth, and was liable to get home before the season ended, the hoodoo would still be working. What I wanted was to cut my personality loose from that team for a whole season, just to see if the club cloudn't win a pennant. Not that I couldn't have won the flag plenty of times, if I'd have wanted to bust over the salary limit of the league, but I don't go in for such unsportsmanlike procedure. Managers who exceed league salary limits are doing the great national game more harm than any other cause, in my opinion, and when they are caught at it they should be barred from the diamond forever.

Then the thought came to me that I might go over to China and pretend to die there, and have my remains shipped back home in a casket. It was the only way I could see to let the next manager of the Rockhaven baseball team be entirely freed from the incubus of my presence. Besides, if Kate made good in managing my team, I figured that she could make good in managing my entire estate, and I was just about ready to step down and out and leave active business affairs to some one cleverer and younger than myself. So I had a double motive in arranging that trip to China and in fixing up that death stunt just as I had planned it.

The matter of being declared officially dead wasn't so very difficult. I paid five hundred dollars to a starving English doctor in Shanghai, and the rest was easy, after I had the certificate. The casket, with nothing in it, was sealed in a leaden coffin. I didn't carry any insurance, and the life insurance companies are the only institutions that are opening coffins these days to make sure of the death of citizens of any walk in life. It cost me three or four times what I had paid for the certificate to get that casket shipped home, but after that was safely done, I figured that all I had to do was to wait in China until the end of the season and then go home and find out how the Rockhavens had flourished under their new manager. I had made a will before my departure, and had stated my wishes with regard to Kate's management of the team and coming into possession of the rest of my fortune if she made good as a magnate, and I knew Schoonover & Schoonover would see that every detail of that document was carried out.

The possibility of a contest over my will worried me somewhat, as I knew the nature of the two before-mentioned cousins at Dolby Center, and I couldn't see them passing up a chance to worry Kate or to get possession of a share of that estate. My other cousin, Seth Slade, out in Montana, I knew was the sort that makes little account of the money of dead relatives. He'd be glad to abide by the terms of any will I chose to write, even if I didn't leave him the price of a pinto horse. Seth and I went to school together, and we always understood each other first-rate. He's made good in cattle-ranching out West, and it's one of the big regrets of my life that Seth and I haven't been able to see each other more than once every three or four years.

I was wrong, though, when I thought I could stick around China during the baseball season. I hadn't any more than shipped the casket containing my supposed remains, when I began to figure on getting back where the baseball bulletin boards would begin to bloom in the spring. It took from four to six weeks for the Rockhaven papers to reach me, and I couldn't stand for any such delay as that when it came to reading about the affairs of the team. I lingered in China just ten days, and then I got on a boat and followed the casket across. I didn't go all the way to Rockhaven on the trail of the casket. I didn't think that it would be safe for me to go right into my own town and witness my own funeral, as Tom Sawyer and his pals did. A portly old gentleman with the white waistcoat habit would look fine trying to hide under a seat so he could listen to his own funeral sermon!

I just hit the trail for Cousin Seth's ranch in Montana, and glad I was to be there. I had prepared Seth for my arrival with a preliminary letter, or I guess he would have fallen dead when he saw me. As it was, it was nearly a week before he had convinced himself that I really hadn't been buried in that lead casket back in Rockhaven.

There isn't overmuch to do on a Montana cattle ranch in winter except to make bets that the thermometer will register lower than it did the day before. Seth took the Rockhaven papers, and he subscribed, at my request, to the newspapers in the towns that made up the remainder of the circuit. We saw where Kate had consented to accept the management of the team that I had so rudely thrust upon her. Then we noticed where she had gone to the annual meeting of the Corn Belt League, and I just hugged myself when I learned how she had euchred those managers out of a bunch of players. I never could have pulled such a deal myself in a thousand years. I knew every one of those men she had traded should have been chased off the team long before, but I never had the heart to fire the rascals, and as for trading, I was such a poor stick that I never opened a dicker with another manager in my life, because I knew to a certainty that I would be the stingee.

"But of course it don't make any difference how well a baseball team shows on paper," said Cousin Seth Slade. "You wait till next July before congratulating yourself that the Rockhaven team is going to win a pennant at last. I ain't knocking that girl a bit, because I think she's a wonder. That lilac sox game of hers beats anything I ever heard of for publicity. But press clippings ain't going to do her much good if her team don't win."

Well, we got the papers describing the opening game, and we were pretty blue ranchers when we read about the walkaway the Ossoway team had. But the way the team cleaned up the next two games and almost got the last gave us hope. I saw that the girl was getting that sullen backstop, Brown, to catch the game he really was capable of—something I never could do in all the years I managed the mule. But luck seemed to be breaking against the Lilac Sox. We figured things out close, and we saw where the other teams were getting all the breaks. Then we heard that Watkins, the team's star pitcher, had gone to the hospital, with a fine case of typhoid to keep a few nurses busy. That settled it. Seth came in and found me packing a suitcase.

"What are you a-doin', you old idiot?" he howled.

"I'm going back to Rockhaven to help that girl manage the team," I said. "I can't keep my hands off that club any longer. It's a shame what I've saddled that young girl with. Women ain't cut out for responsibilities like that. Woman's place is the fireside and the home, and—er, all that sort of thing."

"Fireside and home nothing!" said Seth. "You let that girl alone. Don't you dare stir off this ranch. Any girl that's got spunk and ability enough to become foreman of a department in one of them big mercantile ranches is perfectly capable of managing the dinky bunch of hamfatters you call a ball team."

I stopped packing because Seth is one of the most determined men in Montana.

"I know how we can help that girl," continues Seth, "without stirring out of the borders of this here State. Lazin' around Crow Agency there's an Indian who's the best pitcher of the Crow or any other tribe. He's a wonder of wonders. He's beat every team around this part of the State, and as long as he can keep away from firewater he's fit for the fastest company in the world. But let him get a sight of the label of a whisky bottle, and he's gone for a month. I'll send the Injun to Cousin Kate. He's punched cows for me, and thinks my brand's O. K. instead of Lazy S. I'll tell her to keep him away from whisky or vice versey. Maybe, with good luck, he'll keep straight and bring the team up where it ought to be."

Well, there was nothing for it but to consent to this plan. We saw the Injun, for I insisted on going along to the agency with Seth to find him. He was willing to go and pitch his head off, just to show his good feelings toward Seth. We bought his ticket and a Pullman section, and he went in style, waving farewell to at least three young squaws on the platform. He wasn't any old-style, woman-hating Injun, that boy!"

Then we watched the papers and saw where the Injun had arrived and had pitched his first game, which happened to be against the New Rochelles. He won his game without extending himself in the least, and from then on he began to walk through the league as if it had been made to order for him. He beat them all, good and bad, and incidentally he made a new league strikeout record against Nichols' hard-hitting Leevilles that were leading in club batting. The Rockhavens began to climb. There wasn't any more wavering. The team shot out of seventh into fifth place by winning a double-header. Then, after a wait of two or three days, it passed into the first division. Nashburg, Leeville, and Ossoway were ahead of the Rockhavens there. In a week, Nashburg had been passed. Then there was a tough game which the Indian pitched against the Leevilles. That was the game that gave him the new strikeout record. It put the team into second place, with only the Ossoways ahead. I thought everything was cinched for a pennant for Rockhaven, but one August day Seth comes stamping into the ranch-house, white with rage.

"The cussed Injun has gone and jumped the team!" he yelled. "I'll kill that Crow if he ever shows up here again. With him gone, Cousin Kate ain't got any more show of getting that pennant than I have of being appointed a professor at Yale."

I looked at the paper Seth had in his hand. There was a big, black heading which read:

STAR PITCHER DESERTS TEAM.
Indian Twirler of the Rockhavens, Whose
Sensational Work Has Put That Club
in Second Place, Mysteriously Disappears.—Lilac Sox's Chances
as Pennant Winners Have
Gone Glimmering.

After having my hopes all nicely budded, and then seeing 'em get frost-bitten like that, all on account of a no-account Injun, it's no wonder that I wished I had pulled off an honest-to-gracious death stunt in China. But the more I got to thinking about it, the more off-color the whole thing looked to me.

"Seth," I said, "that Injun was doped—whisky-doped, maybe, but all the same he was doped."

"I believe you're right," Says Seth, slowly. "That Injun never hunted whisky. Some one gave it to him. There's some double-crossin' goin' on back there. I'm goin' to hit the trail for Rockhaven, and I'm goin' to circle all around the towns in that league, and when I find the manager that doped our Crow Injun pitcher, I'm goin' to make him jump over the highest part of the outfield fence in his own ball park!"

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Fourth of July Address.

Friends, fellow citizens and boys:
We celebrate this day,
Free from explosions, fights and noise
In quite a novel way.
We do not maim our fellow man,
Nor cause him needless pain;
To make the day safe is our plan,
And eminently sane.

To shoot the stranger in the leg,
To fire a neighbor's house,
To blow up powder by the keg,
To make a wild carouse,
To fill the land with new-made graves,
With cripples and with woe,
Once proved that we weren't Britain's slaves,
Or something, don't you know!

But now that seems a needless waste
Of money and of life,
And so our present plans are chaste
And free from noise and strife.
In short, new freedom we have won
From evils—catch that brat!
You must not blow your head off, son,
A-celebrating that!

* * *

The Cannon's Roar.

When I hear the cannons roar July Fourth I always think of the story about the Hon. Joseph Cannon when he visited the school of a town where he was billed to speak and was entertained by an exhibition of amateur oratory, the selection being the "Battle of Waterloo."

Just as the boy reached the end of the first paragraph, Speaker Cannon suddenly gave vent to a violent sneeze.

"'But hush! Hark!'" declaimed the youngster. "'A deep sound strikes the rising knell! Did you hear it?'"

The visitors smiled and a moment later the second sneeze came with increased violence.

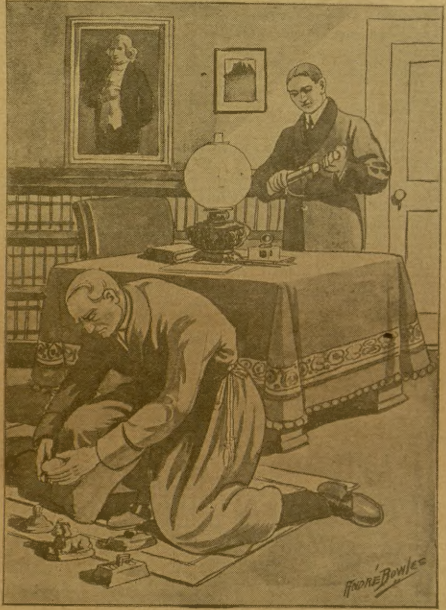
"'But hark!'" bawled the boy. "'That sound breaks in once more! And nearer, clearer, deadlier, than before! Arm! Arm! It is the cannon's opening roar!'"

This was too much and the laugh that broke from the party swelled to a scream when "Uncle Joe" chuckled, "Put up your weapons, children; I won't shoot any more."

A Duel of Detectives

Or, The Conflict in Clews

By Lloyd Thacher



There on the floor, kneeling, was the servant.

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CHAPTER VI.

VERNON SILVER, despite his slight frame and a life that had been passed mostly in drawing-rooms previous to his acquaintance with Dick Dyke, loved the open country, and even the storm of the morning passed in driving Dick's car toward the home of Colonel Jordan did not take from him the delight of being out on an exciting chase after some criminal. He sat in the big touring car, bent over the wheel, reveling in the fight against the elements, as he neared the scene of the robbery.

Having traversed the road many times in company with Dyke on the latter's visits to his old friend, Vernon knew every turn and landmark.

"I must be pretty near there," he was saying to himself, just about the time Dick, back in their comfortable apartment, was sleeping calmly. "I wish the road was just a little less muddy. The car skids like the mischief."

Skid! The words were expressive at that instant. The front wheels, after the manner of front wheels of automobiles when dropping into and working out of ruts of a muddy road, fairly jumped the track, and before the young man could grasp the emergency brake, the big car was reposing peacefully, but a bit angrily, in the ditch at the side of the road.

"Flowers of May!" muttered Vernon Silver, as he climbed from his seat and felt about for the electric searchlight with which the car was equipped. "It will be some job to get this thing on the road again."

It is a sad fact that the young man was addicted to the smoking of cigarettes when anything especially wrong happened to him. Now, putting from him the thought that every minute might count, he climbed back into the protection of the tonneau and lighted one of the little things.

"I presume," he thought, "that I would gain time by leaving the car where it is and walking on to the Colonel's. It will need a couple of his horses to pull it out of here."

He took several pulls at his cigarette, then threw it away with regret, descended to the ground once more, and surveyed the situation. "Lights out," he muttered. "No one will be apt to run into the machine where it is down here—and economy is the mother of wisdom."

He therefore darkened the scene, buttoned his coat tight, and was about to start to walk the mile or so that separated him from the home of the Colonel, when, through the silence of a temporary lull in the storm, came a voice. And the voice carried one word to his ears, bringing the young man to a sudden halt.

"Jenkins," was the name he heard spoken in a husky, gruff tone.

Then Vernon heard the slosh of feet splashing along through the mud. He moved back from the road. There was little chance that the approaching men would see the car in the darkness as it stood near a clump of trees which would prevent its being outlined against the sky.

"Worth thousands, so he said," came the next words.

"Why didn't he come?" another voice entered the conversation.

"Search me," returned the first speaker. "The old fool!"

Now Vernon's mind had been full of the affair at the Colonel's home. Naturally he had been thinking of the possibilities, and the faithful old servant's name had entered his head just as the picture of the attractive grounds had been visualized in his mind. The hearing of the name of the old servant, therefore, spoken in a gruff voice on a country road in the neighborhood of the robbery, if such it was, had thrilled the young man instantly. It would be a satisfactory thing, he thought, to pick up a valuable pointer on his way to the scene of action.

He could hear the men just passing him now, though the storm had resumed its usual vigor, and the pelting of the rain made sounds less distinct.

"I guess I'll waste a few minutes following them," thought Silver, as he moved in the direction taken by the men. He had heard enough already to convince him that the old servant was not as faithful as had been supposed, though Jenkins was a common name, and the purpose of these men might, after all, be harmless.

"He hasn't got long to live, anyway," continued the man whose voice had been heard first.

"Don't talk like a fool," returned his companion.

Now there was silence, save for the beating of the rain on the sodden ground, and Vernon, slipping along in the hope of hearing something more, could not tell how close to the men he was. And now, just as his car had betrayed him, his feet played him false. The right one splashed in a puddle of water and the left slipped straight forward. A second's struggle to regain his equilibrium accomplished that purpose, but brought disastrous results. The splashing and sloshing his feet made halted the men just in front of him.

"Somebody's follerin' us," came the exclamation.

"Maybe it's Jenkins."

"Shut up!"

And then a huge figure loomed up in front of Silver, a face, blurred in the darkness and rain, was shoved close to his, while a whisky-laden breath assailed him. Then, before he could dodge, something crashed against his face, and a blackness darker than the night enveloped him.

Through the mud and water of the road two pairs of feet plowed, while beside the road lay the unconscious figure of the young man.

"He couldn't ever know us ag'in if he saw us," growled one of the runners.

"What did ye hit him fer?" panted the other.

"Jest to show him that he can't folley respectable people that's attendin' to their business," returned the first speaker.

"Guess it won't hurt him none, anyway. Who was he, do ye s'pose?"

"Jenkins might have gone back on us and sent somebody to fook us up," said the fellow.

"Well," came the complacent comment as the speaker slowed down to a walk, "they ain't got anythin' on us. Let the old fool say wot he wants to."

"And he won't talk—he don't dare."

"No. But I'll settle with him, sure es ye're a foot high."

Back in the roadway beside the useless automobile, Vernon Silver was just raising his hand to his head. In spite of his unpleasant experience, a smile came to his dirty face.

"There's one good thing," he remarked half aloud, "a blow like that can't take what a body knows away from him. And I guess I know enough to give Mr. Jenkins an unpleasant half-hour. Poor old boy!" his thoughts went on. "It doesn't seem possible that he would have anything to do with men like that."

Picking himself up, and without trying to remove any of the mud that now covered him from head to foot, the young man plodded on in the direction of the home of Colonel Jordan, realizing that it was useless to try to follow the men who had attacked him, and feeling that they had given him enough information already to enable Dick to work with some light on the case.

"I guess," he mused, "that blow would have been a bit harder if they had known all I heard. One good thing about that sort of gruff fellows—they don't realize how loud they talk."

It did not take the wiry young man long to cover the distance to the Colonel's gate, and the square stone pillars loomed up against the dead sky long before he had begun to look for them.

And at the instant Vernon realized that he had reached his destination, he experienced his third shock of the morning. He felt strong arms about his frail body, and heard a sharp voice speak in tones of command.

"Who are you?" came the vibrant query.

"And you?" echoed Silver.

"Never mind," exclaimed the man whose arms encircled him. "It is a strange time for a person to be walking abroad."

"I might say the same," returned Silver, and as he spoke he wriggled, dropped to the ground, and prepared to defend himself against further attack.

'I am Colonel Jordan," were the next words, "and I demand——"

But the old man's sentence was interrupted by Vernpn's ringing laugh. "A nice way to greet a poor fellow who's traveled miles through this storm to help you," he said.

"Vernon Silver!" cried the Colonel.

"And Dick's car is about a mile down the road, sir. We'll need horses in this case. It's in the ditch."

"Better leave it there till morning," returned the old man. "We won't need it till then."

"But what are you doing out here?" asked Vernon.

"Trying to see what the tracks in the mud will tell us," replied the other. "The battery of my electric searchlight burned out just before you came along, and I'm going back to the house. I believe that I have covered the ground pretty well."

"And left your own tracks to cover up those made by the thief," laughed Silver. "You amateur detectives are funny sometimes."

"The rain would have done it if I had not," said Colonel Jordan, hurt by the laughter of his young friend.

They made their way to the house, where Jenkins was ready with hot coffee, which was as acceptable to Vernon as to the Colonel, for whom it had been prepared. As Silver watched the old servant fussing about to make them comfortable, he could not believe that he had anything to do with the disappearance of whatever had been taken from the house. And yet the talk of the men on the road was very much against him.

As they drank their coffee Colonel Jordan told Vernon the facts in the case.

"And where," queried Silver, "is the famous Twombly Towne?"

"He is in bed," replied the Colonel. "You know he, too, came through the storm and needed the rest. He was wet and cold, and assured me that he would have no difficulty in solving this matter for me. I believe, in fact, that he has made up his mind already who the guilty party is."

"And who is that, may I ask?"

"A girl he met on the road."

"He has explained to his own satisfaction, has he," asked Silver, "why she stole the valuable paper-weight alone, leaving many other articles of value untouched?"

"I have not discussed the case with him," replied the Colonel.

Silver decided to keep the information he had gained from the men on the road until he had talked with Dick Dyke, knowing the peculiar way in which the detective handled important news, and fearing to spoil the good work he had already done.

After a time, therefore, he called up Dick's apartment in New York, and left word with Grant, who answered the call, to tell Dyke to communicate with him as soon as possible.

They had just decided to turn in and get a bit of rest before daylight should be upon them, when Twombly Towne, clad in silk pajamas and a flowered dressing gown, entered the room.

"I was a bit restless," he said, "and hearing you down here decided that I might miss something if I remained upstairs. I have heard great accounts of your work, Mr. Dyke, and was anxious to see you."

The Colonel explained that Dick had remained in town and that Vernon was merely his assistant, while the latter expressed his happiness at meeting so famous a man. Towne took his compliments as a matter of course, and deprecated the difficulty of the case.

"It is all very simple," he said. "Of course it was a matter of luck—my meeting the girl on the road, but the psychological explanation is not so simple, and my study of that phase of the criminal mind has been of great assistance to me in reaching my conclusion."

"You believe that the girl is the guilty party, then?' asked Vernon, innocently.

"Without doubt," replied the great Englishman. "Of course, I understand that both you and Mr. Dyke are young men, and undoubtedly scoff at the psychological aspects of a criminal case. But believe me, as you Americans say, there are mental laws which are as inflexible as the laws of nature."

"And her reason for stealing the weight?" asked Vernon.

"An uncontrollable love of unique beauty of design, which, Colonel Jordan tells me, was exemplified in the missing article."

The detective then showed Silver the drawing of the figure the Colonel had seen, and pointed out just how the lines could be made by a woman's gown, blown by the wind.

"How do you suppose she saw the thing?" came Silver's inquiry. "I understand that it has been on this library table ever since it came into the possession of the Colonel, and that no young woman, whose voice you describe so well, has been in this room since he got the thing."

"Your question," replied Towne, smiling indulgently, "raises a mere detail. The girl might have worked in the shop where it was made—there are dozens of explanations to that query—and I'm too tired to go into them now. I shall be glad, when your friend arrives, to talk the case over and attempt to show you something of my manner of working. Just now I am going to bed."

With the bow of a cultivated gentleman, Twombly Towne made his exit, and Vernon, smiling, looked at the Colonel.

"I wish," he said slowly, "that Dick and I could be as sure of ourselves and our deductions as he is."

"I don't," exclaimed Colonel Towne, as he, too, passed up the stairs to his room.

Vernon Silver, having prepared for bed, donned one of the Colonel's bathrobes, which he had borrowed, and, knowing the location of the room of Jenkins, slipped silently down the hall toward it. In a deep shadow he took his seat on the floor, his eyes on the door of the old servant's room.

"It won't do any harm," he told himself, "to keep an eye on the old chap. I don't want to go to sleep on the job."

The great house was soon wrapped in silence, and Vernon's eyes began to droop. Occasionally, in the stillness, a queer night sound brought him to himself with a start, bht the returning quiet soon began to get the better of him again. The minutes dragged on, and Silver was beginning to laugh at himself for a fool, when a creaking down the hall stiffened his back and brought a sudden beating to his heart.

Surely a door was opening. Vernon almost stopped breathing, so important did absolute silence seem to him. Now he heard a faint sound coming from the direction of old Jenkins' door. Silence again, then that indescribable sound. Now the top stair creaked under some weight.

Vernon rose to his feet and moved in the direction whence had come the last sound. A dim light was burning in the hall below, the electricity having been turned off, and in a moment a shadow grew on the deep red of the heavy carpet. Then the figure of old Jenkins was outlined against a background of red wall paper.

Vernon stood on the first step, as the old man, his body trembling, opened the door into the library, then closed it silently behind him.

Down the stairs like a cat crept Silver. His right hand clutched the small revolver he had placed in a pocket of his dressing gown. Now he turned the handle of the library door with his left hand and shoved it open quickly but silently.

The electricity had not been turned on, and the room was in absolute darkness. For a moment only the beating of the storm on the roof and windows could be heard. Then some one—Jenkins—moved.

Vernon slipped inside the room. Again Jenkins stirred. Vernon's electric searchlight was in his left hand now. He was about to press the little button and flash the light upon the old man, when there came from the big windows a white, dazzling blaze of lightning, flooding the great room in its penetrating glare. Vernon Silver started back, amazed.

There on the floor, kneeling, his head bowed in his arms, was the old servant, and gathered close to him were the remaining precious, shining articles of Colonel Jordan's affection.

CHAPTER VII.

VERNON SILVER'S first impulse when he saw the old servant kneeling there on the floor, so much wealth in his arms, was to dart forward and seize him before he had time to communicate with any accomplice, which he had reason to believe the old man might do.

Then the thought grew suddenly repulsive to him. It could not be possible that this man who had devoted so many years of his life to the service of Colonel Jordan was intending to rob his benefactor. Detective or no detective, he was going to give the old man a chance to explain what it all meant.

"Jenkins," said Silver, and his tone was not harsh, "what are you doing here?"

Jenkins tottered to his feet. The light from outside had disappeared, and the men stood in darkness. It was a tense second until Vernon switched on the electric lights.

"I—I was praying, sir," stammered the old man.

"And why, Jenkins? What have you done?"

"Nothing, sir—nothing," cried the man.

"But you realize how suspicious your actions appear," continued the puzzled young man.

"But I didn't steal the thing. I—I didn't."

"I'm inclined to believe you, Jenkins," returned Vernon, "but I don't see why I feel confidence in you myself. What were you doing here?"

"I can't tell you, sir—I can't tell you—or anybody."

"The police would make you tell," said Vernon, slowly, half ashamed of his veiled threat.

"Even the police couldn't make me," cried Jenkins, and there was the suggestion of determination in the old voice.

"Do you know any men that wanted you to steal these things?" Silver went on.

"I can't tell you a thing, sir. Do as you please with me, I'd die rather than tell a word."

"I suppose there is no use in putting the poor old chap through a cross-examination twice," mused Vernon, "and Dick will have to hear what he has to say. I'll let up on him." He spoke again to the trembling Jenkins, and there was gentleness in his tone. "There isn't any need to disturb the Colonel just now," he said, "but you'll understand that I shall have to tell him about finding you here."

"I suppose so, sir. What will he think of me?"

"So you had better come up and stay in my room till time for you to get up and prepare breakfast—or does your wife help you to get the meals?"

"She did, sir," returned the old man, looking away from Vernon, "until she was taken ill. I have been doing it alone lately."

The two men, one almost tottering, the other full of young vigor, passed from the room, now dark once more, up the stairs to Vernon's apartment. Here Jenkins, at a sign from the other, threw himself on the bed, while Vernon, after closing and locking the door, reclined in a great easy-chair by the window. And neither slept during the time that elapsed before morning broke through the storm.

With the coming of dawn Jenkins was alert, and Vernon followed him down to the kitchen where preparations for breakfast were begun. The old man was touched by Silver's offers of assistance, and Vernon proved that the ability to cook, learned during the days when camping parties had made up a good portion of his summer days, had not subsequently come amiss. Colonel Jordan and Twombly Towne had a good laugh at breakfast when they learned that some of the dishes placed before them had been concocted by the clever young detective.

"You see, I wanted to keep Jenkins in sight," explained Vernon, when the hilarity of the others had subsided.

"And why keep him in sight?" inquired the Colonel. "Were you afraid that he would run away?"

It was then that Silver told them of his discovery during the early morning hours, remarking that he thought Dick ought to be there before any further attempt was made to solve the mystery of Jenkins' behavior. The recounting of the scene in the library made it necessary for Vernon to tell of his encounter with the men on the road, and this caused great consternation to the Colonel.

"I just won't believe that he planned to rob me," he said, when the young man had concluded his story.

"If he did," interposed Towne, "it does not change my opinion that the girl is in it. Jenkins might have been her accomplice, and if such were the case it explains why she did not take more than the one article."

"I confess I fail to follow you," said Vernon.

"Quite possibly," returned the Englishman. "I have been accused before of being somewhat too subtle for some people."

"At any rate," said the Colonel, when the subject of keeping a watch on Jenkins was being discussed, "I'm sure enough of my position to take the chance. I won't have the old fellow treated like a prisoner. If he wants to rob me deaf and dumb and get away with it, he can."

Immediately after breakfast, plans to occupy the time until Dick should arrive on the scene were discussed.

"I presume," said Twombly Towne, "that Mr. Dyke will have no trouble in finding the young lady, and I consider when he has done that, our work is ended. I shall be glad, however, to be of any assistance I can out here."

They donned rain coats and went out to the gate where the Colonel showed them his previous discoveries of footprints and automobile tracks. Despite the heavy rain it was possible to see unmistakably that a car had passed that way within a few hours. Much to Towne's disappointment, however, there were no tracks resembling those made by a woman. And there had been so much passing to and fro by the Colonel that the numerous imprints of men's shoes were blurred.

Vernon Silver then led the others to a place about a mile from the house where he had left the auto and where he had encountered the men, being careful to allow neither of the others to approach the spot until he had made his own examination of the footprints. This procedure amused Towne exceedingly, but he took the young man's seriousness good-naturedly.

They now traced the tracks of the two persons whom Silver had heard talking of Jenkins, backward in the direction whence they had come, and became practically certain that they had accomplished this successfully when they seemed to lead to a rather sheltered place a little way off the road, where boards had been placed between two trees, and papers laid on the ground.

"Some one was here last night, all right," exclaimed the Colonel.

"It's almost fair to assume," commented Silver, "from the tracks and from the conversation I heard, that my friends waited here for Jenkins. You see it is quite close to your house."

"Were it not for the girl," mused Towne, aloud, "I would be inclined to think that the men had arranged with Jenkins to sneak out of the house with the valuable articles, give the things to them, and get back himself before his absence could be noticed."

"As things stand now, he could have done that with the paper-weight that is missing," interposed Colonel Jordan.

"You forget, Colonel," said Vernon, "that they said that the old fool, as they called him, did not show up. Besides, if those men were going to have Jenkins rob the place, they would not have been content with one piece of metal. They would have insisted on all of value that the old man could carry."

Thus arguing, Towne quite satisfied that he had the affair satisfactorily worked out, they returned to the house to wait for news of Dick, whom they expected almost any time—or at least a message from him, as it was getting toward noon and the storm was showing signs of letting up.

Jones, the coachman, was dispatched to arrange for the hauling of the automobile out of the ditch. The old man had returned from his mission to the village with the information that the only person who had seen a stranger in town during the night or early morning was the proprietor of the livery stable, and thus that field was covered, temporarily, at least. Silver, eager to be at work, accompanied Jones with the horses to the car, and drove it to the house when once it had been pulled back into the road.

It was not until some time after luncheon, on which Jenkins seemed to have worked zealously, that the inaction became almost unbearable. The Colonel was pacing up and down the library floor, Silver was studying again the picture of the strange figure his host had seen in the flash of lightning, and Towne was dreaming over a fine cigar, when the door of the room was opened, and Dick Dyke stood before them.

"Colonel," he said, without preliminary, "if a man comes here and applies for work, give him something to do."

The Colonel and Silver were on their feet at once, while Towne, scarcely moving, smiled at the interruption.

"And why do you think that any man will be here for work, Dick?" exclaimed the Colonel.

"Because I have been watched ever since I left New York in a hired car," returned the young detective. "As I believe that the man watching me is of rather a lower order of intellect, I think he would do the obvious thing—and that is to appear as a poor man out of work, throwing himself on the mercy of a kind-hearted man of means. I may be mistaken of course. Needless to say, he does not know that I know he has been following me."

Dick was introduced to Twombly Towne, and during the next half-hour he learned everything that had been done or found out by the three men whose minds had been occupied with the mystery of the disappearance of the valuable paper-weight.

"And now," said Twombly Towne, "I am curious to ascertain what you found out about the young lady whom I met on the road."

"That she is a young lady," returned Dick, smiling at the famous detective.

"You choose to call a thief a lady?" queried Towne, with eyebrows raised.

"The most difficult thing that I have learned to do," responded Dyke, "has been to restrain myself from jumping at conclusions in any case I am working on. But I've managed to learn to keep an open mind pretty well."

"You mean you doubt your ability to solve a case by deductions early in the developments?" asked Towne, and one might note just the suggestion of a sneer in his inflection.

"I mean that confidence can be overdone, as I have found," replied Dyke. "And in this case, if I were compelled to state my conviction at this point as to whether or not Miss Bland was a thief, I should say no."

"And I should say yes without hesitation," said Towne.

"I repeat," continued Dick, "that I believe it is a mistake to form an opinion too quickly. If one does that, one is tempted to twist every clew in a direction pointing to the guilt of the person one suspects. On the same principle I shall try, believing as I do that she is not guilty, to make any clew point any way it wants to—even to her guilt—though from your expressed opinion I guess you will see that evidence pointing to her as the thief is made clear."

"She was out here last night, or this morning?" asked the Englishman as though conferring a favor.

"Yes," returned Dyke. "As I came in I made an examination of the mud just outside the gate and the gravel of the drive leading from it to the house."

"You found tracks of her?" exclaimed Colonel Jordan.

"No, but I found enough to convince me that she was out there beyond the gate. It was the gravel of the drive that interested me."

"You have seen the car she drove and examined it," remarked Towne, "and thus have had the advantage of us."

"I appreciate that," replied Dyke. Then he faced the great English detective and smiled boyishly. "The person she had with her in the tonneau of the car when you met——"

But Towne interrupted quickly.

"She was alone—there was no one with her," he snapped.

"Then I am in error," Dick went on. "Of course, I could not know positively that there was any one with her, but if you were not here to tell me positively that she was alone in the car, I would stake my reputation that there was some one in the tonneau. That shows," he added, with no trace of sarcasm, "the danger of jumping at conclusions. You see, I would have made a bad mistake that might have set me off on the wrong track."

There was an uneasy silence in the room. Twombly Towne looked at the end of his cigar, while Dick took up the picture Colonel Jordan had drawn and examined it again. Finally the old man spoke.

"Er—er," he began, with unusual hesitation. "Mr. Towne says that it was so dark he couldn't see her face. Perhaps—just perhaps, mind you—he might have missed seeing the second person in the car."

"I saw her figure, plainly enough," mumbled Towne. "I could not have missed seeing a second form."

"Of course not," agreed Dick. "And it would be foolish to suppose that any one would be lying on the floor of the tonneau covered up by a robe or something like that."

"And the rain pouring down in sheets," fairly whispered Vernon Silver.

Twombly Towne had not made the reputation that was his by being a fool. If conceit got the better of him occasionally, perhaps he was to be pardoned. Now he looked at the young man from the country with just a trifle more of respect as he spoke.

"We are human, all of us," he said. "Perhaps even I jump at conclusions occasionally. Suppose, for argument's sake, that there was some one in the tonneau. What have you discovered that would be of interest?"

"Merely that, if there was some one there, that some one had walked on the drive leading from the gate to this house," returned Dick, with no semblance of elation. He took from his pocket an envelope and poured onto the table bits of earth and three little peb-

HOW I DARKENED MY GRAY HAIR

Lady Gives Simple Home Recipe That She Used to Darken Her Gray Hair.

For years I tried to restore my gray hair to its natural color with the prepared dyes and stains, but none of them gave satisfaction and they were all expensive. I finally ran onto a simple recipe which I mixed at home that gives wonderful results. I gave the recipe, which is as follows, to a number of my friends, and they are all delighted with it. To 7 ozs. of water add a small box of Barbo Compound, 1 oz. of bay rum and ¼ oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Use every other day until the hair becomes the required shade, then every two weeks. It will not only darken the gray hair, but removes dandruff and scalp humors, and acts as a tonic to the hair. It is not sticky or greasy, does not rub off and does not color the scalp.

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Be sure to ask for the double strength othine, as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.

bles. "These," he went on, "I found in the tonneau of the car that you met early this morning, and the pebbles and dirt match that of the drive perfectly."

They bent over the evidence, remaining silent while Dick, fair fighter that he was, proceeded to tell the others of his discoveries and of his actions since the Colonel had communicated with him about the loss of the paper-weight.

"So now all is fair," remarked Colonel Jordan, after the young detective had finished. "We all have the same information. What's next on the program?"

"I would like to know all about Jenkins' sick wife," said Dick.

"That's something I know nothing of," returned the Colonel. "I fear that I have been sadly remiss in my attention to my old servant. I haven't been in to see her since she has been sick."

"Who has been doing the cooking?" asked Dick, a bit sharply.

"Why, I suppose she has," the Colonel returned. "It didn't occur to me that she was confined to her room all the time."

"She didn't cook the breakfast, you remember," interposed Vernon. "You complimented me on my work, and old Jenkins seemed glad to have a helper."

"Can it be possible," cried Colonel Jordan, jumping to his feet, "that the old rascal has been doing the cooking for me and waiting on table, too?"

"It would not be so very difficult," commented Dick, "as there was no one but you to serve. Perhaps we had better talk to him about it now."

Colonel Jordan pressed a bell-button in the wall, and in a few minutes the feeble old servant was standing in the doorway.

"Jenkins," said the Colonel, "I know all about last night, and this morning, and I know that you have some good reason for refusing to talk. I'm going to stand by you and make things as easy for you as possible. You're in no danger, whatever you have done."

"I—I appreciate that, Colonel Jordan," stammered the old man, "and I want to tell you that I did not take anything from your table—praise Heaven!"

"What I want you to do," the Colonel went on, "is to answer Mr. Dyke's questions. Don't be afraid."

"How is your wife, Jenkins?" asked Dick, and his smile should have put Jenkins at his ease.

"About the same, sir," came the faltering reply.

"She hasn't been able to help you in the kitchen for some time, has she?" the detective continued.

"Not for some time, sir."

"Is she well enough to talk to me?"

"Oh, sir," and terror was in the servant's voice, "she can't see any one."

"Does she sleep most of the time, Jenkins?"

"I—I don't—know, sir."

"I am quite a doctor," continued Dick. "Perhaps I could do her some good. I shall take a look at her."

"No—no, sir, don't do that!" pleaded the old man. "She isn't very strong mentally, sir, and I fear to have a stranger see her—don't ask to see her!"

"Jenkins," said Dick, slowly, "why don't you say honestly that your wife is not in the house? Why don't you tell us, who are your friends, what is the matter with you, and why you have been so worried about her and about yourself?"

It was pitiful to see the old man. His legs trembled beneath him, and his eyes looked out appealingly upon his audience.

"She—she isn't in the house—I don't know where she is," came the words at last. "But that is all I can tell you."

Twombly Towne rose to his feet and stood close to the other.

"My man," he said, and his tone was quietly threatening, "you had better tell us all you know, or—well, a police cell isn't a very nice place to stay overnight."

An agonized look came to the old eyes; he gasped and crumpled up on the floor.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Getting Ready.

"There!" exclaimed the little stenographer, taking her watch from her belt and setting it in front of her. "I'm going to hold my breath till it's 5 o'clock and then I'm going to run! I've always felt above watching the clock, but I'm beginning to understand a few things! Besides, I've had a horrible time today trying to get ready for the Fourth."

The bookkeeper slid his ledgers back on the shelf. "Now what's the matter?" he asked, with an exaggerated air of resignation.

"Oh, I'm tired to a frazzle and as cross as two sticks!" The little stenographer exploded.

"Well, don't take it out on me!" objected the bookkeeper, amiably. "What has happened, anyway?"

"Everything!" returned the little stenographer dramatically. "I've been turned into a housekeeper, general utility man—anything but the stenographer I thought I was, the stenographer trying to get things shipshape in preparation for the holiday.

"This morning I had to devote two solid hours to checking up his club bills for Mr. Gray! And my files a mile behind, waiting for a clear minute! If those men don't hear my typewriting machine rattle they think I've nothing to do! And they bother around for an hour to think up something to help me pass the time. Mr. Gray smiled generously when he handed me his bills as if he were giving me the time of my life by permitting me to see how he spends his money—and incidentally keep his personal accounts for him!

"When I finished that, Mr. Nicholas called me in and said his wife had asked him if I wouldn't be so kind as to write out her club programs for the whole of next year! The club was about to adjourn until fall, and it was saving money by doing its own programs instead of having them printed. Mr. Nicholas beamed on me as if he were conferring an honor upon me that could never be estimated in letting me get so close to his wife's club as to spend a few hours writing out the club programs! Then she'll feel so righteous when spending on charity the money I've saved for her, when the full credit—well, it belongs elsewhere, if I do say it myself!

"Just when I was working as hard as I could to get that finished, so that I could get started all that awful filing, who should come out and look over my shoulder but Mr. Brown himself! I could tell that he thought I was presuming a good deal in writing something that was not business letters, so I hastened to explain what it was I was doing. That gave him an idea and he went back into his office and returned presently with his silk gloves.

"'Won't you, please, when you have a little time, just catch these threads together?' he asked. And he showed me fingers of his gloves that were almost entirely gone at the tips! 'Catch them together!' Why, I had positively to crochet new tips on them! And I didn't dare do anything but my very carefulest work for him.

"That's the way it's been all day long! Mr. Gray asked me to pack his suitcase—from that drawer where he keeps shirts and collars, you know—for he had to go out of town for the Fourth. And while I was at that Mr. Vandewater had a bright idea. He suggested that I phone a reservation for him—and then run down and get it! And—oh, well, what's the use? I'm going home!"

She half arose from her chair. As she did so Mr. Brown emerged hastily from his office.

"Here," he said, "I've got to run for my train. Will you shut my desk and close the window and sign the letters I left there?"

The little stenographer nodded and said no word.

"And," called the bookkeeper, as he poked his head back through the door as he was leaving, "don't forget to put the cat out and wind the clock."

* * *

Size and Ability.

"You can't tell by the look of a frog how far he can jump."

That old and crude philosophy is as applicable to men as to frogs, says the Kansas City Star.

A story in the Star, a short time ago, told of the arrival at Union Station of four men, three of them alert, well-dressed, impressive-looking. The fourth wore a battered old gaberdine, frayed at the buttonholes. His manner was timid and retiring. In size he was insignificant.

He was a little great man, Dr. Charles H. Mayo, one of the greatest surgeons the world has ever known.

John B. Gough, the great platform orator, used to tell a story about himself, how he arrived late at a hall in Glasgow, where he was to speak. The place was packed. He could not get in.

To the crowd wedged into the front entrance he told that he must get in, he was Gough, the speaker. They looked at him, he was an undersized man, and laughed. They imagined that Gough, the great orator, must be a tall man.

He went to a side window, hoping to be able to crowd in there. It was already jammed full, and they, too, laughed when he told them he was John B. Gough.

Finally he went to a rear door and told the man on guard there that he was Gough.

"Yes, five or six other men have already told me that," the watchman said. Gough gave him a shilling to pass him in to the stage and after the lecture the doorkeeper went to him and said:

"Well, Gough, you're like a singed cat; better than you look."

Many men who do great things are small in stature and insignificant-looking. Nearly all of them would pass unnoticed in a crowd.

Gen. Sir John French, field marshal in command of the British forces in France, "the incomparable Ney" of the British army, is described as: "Short and squat in stature, a ludicrous figure on horseback and not at all the sort of man in appearance one expects a cavalry leader to be."

And he is "quiet and unassuming." They all are—all the men who do great things.

Lloyd-George, British chancellor of the exchequer, one of the great men of England, is described as follows in Collier's Weekly:

"A short, stocky man, about the size of La Follette, there was nothing distinguished in his appearance." He is known as "the little Welsh lawyer."

Lord Roberts, a great general, was known as "Little Bobs."

Grant was short and stocky. Lord Nelson, "the greatest sea fighter the world has ever seen," was undersized and delicate. Napoleon was "the little Corporal."

Stephen A. Douglas was "the little giant." Harriman and Jay Gould, wizards of railway finance, were undersized. So is John D. Rockefeller.

The list might be extended to columns, disproving the popular belief that for a man to be a genius he must be big; but still the world will keep on believing it.

* * *

Jennie Lind's Salute.

There is a pretty story told of the honor Jennie Lind once paid to the American flag. It was when she was in New York, more than sixty years ago. The frigate St. Lawrence had just returned from a cruise, and the midshipmen went to hear the Swedish nightingale sing at Castle Garden theater, and the next day they called on her in a body. Their enthusiasm and her graciousness soon brought about a visit to the ship and the acceptance of a luncheon tendered her. When she was about to leave the ship she looked up at the Stars and Stripes and said:

"I wish to salute your flag."

"So, standing on the gangway, she sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Silently from all over the ship men gathered with uncovered heads, until the ship's family was all assembled on deck. Nor were they her only audience, for borne upon the still air her song had been heard by many other vessels nearby, and when the wondrous voice ceased steamers blew their whistles and exultant cheers rose from all sides, filling the harbor with their tribute of applause for the beloved artist and of loyal reverence for the flag she had so beautifully saluted.

* * *

Everybody's Friend.

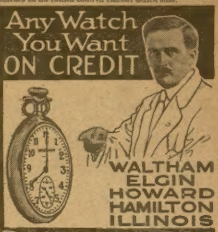
Jack Podger was the most obliging man that ever lived. His services were given gratis to all applicants. He could mend a clock, repair a puncture, drown a kitten, paper a wall, and, in fact, perform any operation known to mortal man. In consequence, Jack's services were in constant demand.

A week or two ago, after cobbling a neighbor's boots, lancing his cousin's gumboil, sweeping the vicar's chimney, and writing a testimonial for his charwoman's nephew, he retired to rest. He was awakened by a terrible bang at his front door, and immediately rushed to the window.

"What's the matter?" he bawled irritably.

"You'll excuse me for troubling you at this time of the night," came the reply, "but the fact is our baby is very cross, and we would like you to come and pacify him. He always laughs when he sees your funny nose."

EDITORIAL NOTE—The advertisement appearing below of the Miller-Hoefer Co., our readers will remember as the same firm who used a full page back cover in 4 colors in our issue of June 19 offering to put any make of watches in an inlaid colored enamel watch case.



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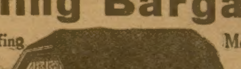

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PRICE WRECKER

Wrong Word.

"Mrs. Clinnick thinks a great deal of her husband."

"You've got the wrong preposition. Make it 'for' instead of 'of.'"

Her Reason.

"What in the world made you jilt Reggie?"

"Oh, he got on my nerves, always asking permission to kiss me."

THEIR FOURTH OF JULY JOKE

Boarding House Wit.

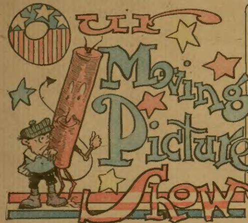
The careless boarder had just upset the gravy boat.

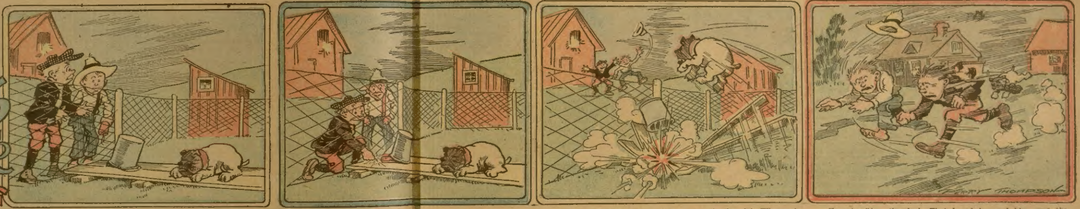
"Another ship submarined," chortled the smart Aleck.

How the Ruction Started.

"Why are Blinks and his wife quarreling so violently?"

"Blinks insists that he can recite Irish brogue jokes. His wife knows he can't."





Sammy Snooks—"Gimme that big firecracker, Froggie; while the Deacon's dorg's asleep we'll git even with him fer chasin' us yesterday!

"When it goes off under this pa[illegible]that dorg will be scared into a fit. Maybe the pail will hit [illegible]on the nose, the old bone-chawin' snoozer!

(Bang!) "Hurray! Look at him go up in the air! Whoopee! But that was one grand Fourth of July joke on that dorg!"

Froggie—"Aw, thunder! That board bounced him over the fence! What did you use that big firecracker for? Gee, he'll chew the pants off of us!"

One Too Many.

A street car conductor was watching the work of a new conductor.

"Here, Foley, how is this?" said the experienced man. "You have ten passengers and only nine fares rung up."

"Is that so?" said Foley. Then turning to the passengers he shouted:

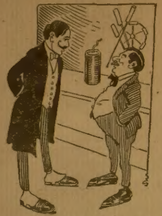
"There's wan too many av yez on the cyar! Get out of here, wan av yez!"

It Was No Use.

Two Irishmen were bothered with the mosquitoes at bedtime. One night Pat said to Mike, "Tonight we will go under the bed."

So when night came they did, but were little more than settled when a firebug flew past.

"Oh, it's no use, Pat," said Mike. "They're coming with lanterns now."



Floorwalker—"What did that lady want?"

Salesman—"Wanted to know if we'd have a marked down sale of fireworks on the 5th of July."

The Prize Fowl.

An old Scotchwoman had a reputation far and near for her prize fowls, and had often been awarded prizes at the neighboring shows. A gentleman staying in the neighborhood, hearing her poultry so highly praised, resolved to give her a trial, so sent an order for the finest turkey she had, and after a little delay was delighted to receive as fine a specimen as could be wished for.

This delight, however, was short-lived, for, on trying to carve the bird, he found it so tough as to resist all his efforts. Enraged, he sallied forth to find the woman who he believed had swindled him.

After listening to his outburst of wrath she exclaimed: "Hoot, mon! Why, ye canna tell a guid fowl when ye see ane. That bubbly-jock's ta'en the first prize at th' show for th' last seven years!"

An Extreme Demand.

A pourparler was being held between two of the opposing armies on a windy promontory during a snowstorm.

"You have captured our commander-in-chief." So the pourparler began.

"That is true."

"We will exchange three generals for him."

"No."

"Three generals and a colonel."

"No, I tell you."

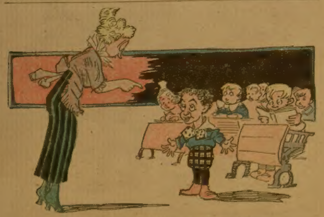
"Then six generals, three colonels and——"

"No, no, no! You can't have him back for anything short of a suit of all wool underwear in good condition!"

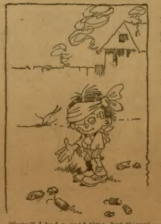
It Would Be Fatal.

A certain popular statesman who has a great reputation as an after-dinner speaker was one evening entertaining a party of congenial friends. He was at his best. But even he had to take breath, and as he paused momentarily to do so one of his friends suddenly straightened up in his chair, and in a most impressive manner said:

"Old man, you might have pneumonia and recover, you might have fever and recover, you might have smallpox and recover, but"—and he shook a warning finger solemnly—"if you ever get lockjaw you'll burst!"



Teacher—"What is four per cent interest on a thousand dollars?"
Johnny Dee—"Foolishness! A feller should get ten!"



"Sure!" I had a good time, but Georgie Gotrox, he had a better one! He had a whole dollar to spend an' he's in the hospital."

A Poor Marksman.

Sergeant (digustedly to Private Jones)—"Stop! Don't waste your last bullet. Nineteen are quite enough to blaze away without hitting the target once. Go behind that wall there and blow your brains out."

Jones walked quietly away, and a few seconds later a shot rang out.

"Good heavens! has that fool done what I told him?" cried the sergeant, running behind the wall. Great was his relief when he saw Private Jones coming toward him.

"Sorry, sergeant," he said apologetically; "another miss."

Bee Line.

A soldier on guard in South Carolina during the war was questioned as to his knowledge of his duties.

"You know your duty here, do you, sentinel?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now, suppose they should open on you with shells and musketry, what would you do?"

"Form a line, sir."

"What! One man form a line?"

"Yes, sir; form a bee line for camp, sir."

Her Idea of Wombat.

"Young Mrs. Wombat doesn't want her husband to go hunting."

"Why not?"

"Says he's such a dear that somebody is bound to take a shot at him."

Not the Kind Wanted.

"Which way to the corset department?" a lady asked a floor walker at Loveman's yesterday.

"Straight back, madam."

"No, not straight back," was the reply. "I want a straight front.

He Wouldn't Die.

"Would you die for me?" she asked dreamily.

"Oh, say!" he retorted, in a matter-of-fact way, "if you haven't any more ambition than to be looking for dead ones, you're not the girl for me."

Beginning the Day Wrong.

There was gloom on the face of the Iowa farmer.

"What's the matter, Elijah?" asked his nearest neighbor. "Flapjacks given out over to your house?"

"Worse'n that," said Elijah. "You know, 'twasn't apple year, and wife says we can't have any more pie for breakfast."

"Can't you make out if you have apple pie noon and night?"

"I can, because I've got to," said Elijah, "but I tell you it upsets me, starting the day wrong like that."

A Terrible Power.

Lady (to Chinese servant)—"John, is it true that you Chinese servants have a trade-union?"

John —"Yessee."

"Suppose I should discharge you without paying?"

"We boycotte you."

"But suppose, instead of a Chinaman, I should get a girl?"

"Chinee union payee policeman to nottee flirtee."

A Typographical Blunder.

A Kansas paper recently complimented its local merchants on their marked advance in advertising methods.

"We have the best-dressed widows in the State," it said.

The next day it explained that it meant windows.

He[illegible]oice.

Th[illegible]tress—"I s[illegible]ke one of [illegible]hildren to [illegible] with me [illegible]orning, Mar[illegible]"

Th[illegible]neral—"Yes[illegible]which?"

Th[illegible]tress—"Oh[illegible]chever wi[illegible]st with my [illegible] mauve dress."

Jus[illegible] Good.

W[illegible]ed Customer—"[illegible] want a qu[illegible] worth of c[illegible]c acid."

C[illegible] "This is a ha[illegible]e store. Bu[illegible]—or—a [illegible]line of ropes [illegible]volvers and [illegible]."

[illegible]ant.

"A[illegible]ng importa[illegible]n the pape[illegible] morning?"

"[illegible]deed. I see [illegible]s a de[illegible] of the gov[illegible]ore at the [illegible] last nig[illegible]"

Neutralizing Poison.

Col. John H. George, a New Hampshire barrister, tells a good story on himself. Meeting an old farmer recently whom he had known in his youth, the old fellow congratulated the Colonel on his youthful appearance.

"How is it you have managed to keep so fresh and good-looking all these years?" quoth he.

"Well," said George, "I'll tell you. "I've always drank new rum and voted the Democratic ticket."

"Oh! yes," said the old man, "I see how it is; one pizen neutralizes the other!"

Embarrassing.

"You've made a mistake in your paper," said an indignant man, entering the editorial sanctum of a daily paper. "I was one of the competitors at that athletic match yesterday, and you have called me 'the well-known light-weight champion.'"

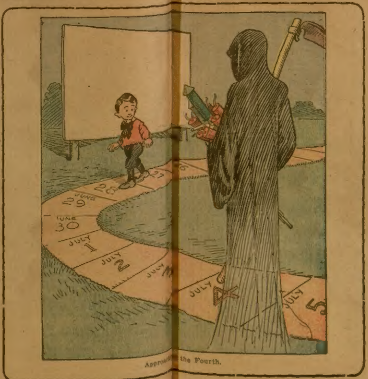
"Well, aren't you?" inquired the editor.

"No, I'm nothing of the kind; and it's confoundedly awkward, because I'm a coal merchant."

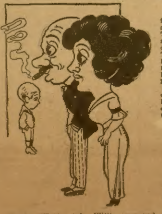
Has the Floor.

Barnes (to Shedd, who has just finished a long letter)—"Funny that you should write such long letters to your wife, when you have so little to say to her when she is present."

Shedd—"Not at all. When I am writing I have the floor."



Appro[illegible] the Fourth.



Hubby—"Better take Willie over and have his photograph taken."

Wifey—"Why?"

Hubby—"The Fourth of July is most here."

No Laughing Matter.

An Ohio man was having a lot of trouble piloting a one-tent show through the Middle West. He lost a number of valuable animals by accident and otherwise. Therefore it was with a sympathetic mien that one of the keepers undertook the task of breaking the news of another disaster. He began thus:

"Mr. Smith, you remember that laughin' hyena in cage nine."

"Remember the laughing hyena?" demanded the owner, angrily. "What the deuce are you driving at?"

"Only this, Mr. Smith. He ain't got nothing to laugh at this morning."

The Deacon's Secret.

"Speaking of preachers," said an American bishop, "reminds me of the negro pastor who met one of his deacons going home at midnight with a bag of chickens on his back. Said he sternly:

"'Deacon Jones, where you git dem hens?'

"'I stole 'em.'

"'Yes, but where you stole 'em?'

"'What's dat to you?'

"'Brudder Jones, is you so mean dat you won't put your poor old pastor on?'"

Refused Sympathy.

The young man seemed greatly agitated, not to say frightened, as he approached the father of the "dearest girl on earth."

"Sir, your daughter has promised to become my wife."

"Well, don't come to me for sympathy; you might know something would happen to you, hanging around our house five nights a week."

A Health Indicator.

Mrs. Nexdoor—"How is old Mr. Moneybaggs this morning?"

Mrs. Sharpeye—"I haven't heard; but I noticed that Dr. Bigfee looked very gloomy when he left the Moneybaggs residence a little while ago."

Mrs. Nexdoor—"Ah, then the dear old gentleman is getting well."

Their Combined Effort.

A popular sea captain had died, and his fellow townsmen thought he should have a suitable headstone with an epitaph. The four leading men of the hamlet were selected to write a poem, and it was decided that each should write one line. The first found it very simple and wrote his easily. The second looked at the first line and puzzled a little, then wrote his. The third examined the other two lines and at length wrote his. The fourth contemplated the three lines and sat and chewed his pencil a long time. At last he wrote his line. The townspeople were considerably surprised when they saw the headstone. The verse read:

"Here lies the captain of the sea,
Here lies him, here lies he,
Hallelujah, hallelujee,
A, B, C, D, E, F, G."

An Interesting S[illegible]t.

Lawyer (to timid young woman)—"Have you ever appeared as witness in a suit before?"

Young Woman (blushing)—"Yes, sir, of course."

Lawyer—"Please state to the jury just what suit it was."

Young Woman (with more confidence)—"It was a nun's veiling, shirred down the front and trimmed with a lovely blue, and hat to match——"

Judge (rapping violently)—"Order in the court!"

Unappreciated Advice.

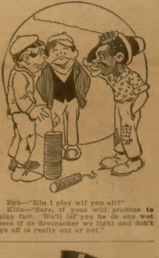
Mrs. Jack—"By the way, Jack, Mr. Sebrecht says you ought to cover the lawn with fertilizer this fall."

Jack (pushing the lawn mower)—"Oh, does he? I s'pose he thinks I want this grass to grow even faster than it does now."

Dangerous Method.

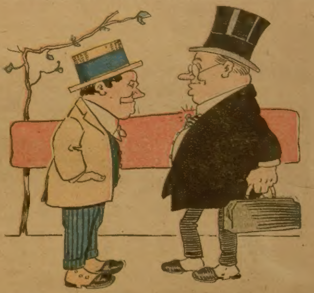
"What are your usual modes of punishment?" was among the questions submitted to a teacher in a rural district in Ohio. Her answer was, "I try moral suasion first, and if that does not work I use capital punishment."

As it was a neighborhood where moral suasion had not been a success, and the children were scarce, the committee took no risks.



Eph—"Kin I play wif you all?"

Kids—"Sure, if yous will promise to play fair. We'll let you be de one wot sees if de firecracker we light and don't go off is really out or not."



Friend—"How's business?"

Dr. Bones—"Fine; all the children had firecrackers and the parents attended patriotic dinners."

Gold and the Girl

Or, A Cattle Man's Grit

By Wilder Anthony

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE AVENGER ACTS.

FLOURISHING the smoking gun, Moran got unsteadily to his feet and turned a ghastly, dappled visage to the girl, who, stunned and helpless, was gazing at him in wide-open horror. But she had nothing more to fear from him, for now that he believed Wade dead, the agent was himself too overshadowed by the crime to think of perpetrating another and worse one. He had already wasted too much valuable time. He must [illegible]

"I got him!" he croaked, in a terrible voice. "I got him as I said I would, d—n him." With a blood-curdling attempt at a laugh, he staggered out of the house into the sunshine.

For a moment, Dorothy's horrified eyes followed him. Then with a sob of grief, she bent over Wade at her feet. She shook him gently and begged him to speak to her, but she could get no response from him, and as she was hurrying from the room for help, her glance fell upon the carbine in the corner by the door. As she contemplated the weapon, her wide, fear-stricken eyes narrowed and glinted with sudden purpose. Seizing the gun, and cocking it with her thumb, she stepped out of the [illegible]

Moran was tacking unsteadily toward the barn, where his horse was tied. He was tottering along like a drunken man, waving his arms about, and talking to himself. Bringing the carbine to her shoulder, Dorothy steadied herself against the door-frame and carefully took aim. While she sighted the weapon, her usually pretty face, now streaked with blood from the scratches she had given Moran, wore the expression of one who has seen all that is dear in life slip away from her. At the crack of the carbine, Moran stopped short, and a convulsive shiver seemed to run through him from head to foot. After a single step forward, he dropped to the ground. For several moments his arms and legs twitched spasmodically, like the limbs of a slaughtered steer; then he lay still.

Horrified by what she had done, now that it was accomplished, Dorothy stepped back into the house for an instant, when a low groan from Wade brought her to his side. She hastily tore open his shirt, when he clutched at it, and exposed the wound, which wrung a cry of pity from her. To her tender gaze the hurt seemed a frightful one. Dreading lest he should regain consciousness and find himself alone, she decided to remain with him, instead of going for help; most likely she would only miss her mother and Barker by searching for them, anyway. She stopped the flow of blood as best she could, and placed a pillow beneath the ranchman's head, kissing him afterward. Santry reached the ranch-house just as Mrs. Purnell and Barker returned with their berries, and the three found the girl bathing the wounded man's head and crying over him.

"Boy, boy!" sobbed Santry, dropping for a moment on his knees before the unconscious figure. "Who done it to you?" Dorothy weepingly explained the circumstances, and when she told of her own part in shooting Moran, the old fellow patted her approvingly on the shoulder. "Good girl!" he said hoarsely. "But I wish it had been left for me."

"Merciful Heavens!" [illegible] Mrs. [illegible] [illegible] With trembling hands she took the basin and towel from her daughter, but succeeded only in splashing water over the floor.

"You!" said Santry so ferociously to Barker that he whimpered like a beaten [illegible] "Help me to lay him on the bed, so's to do it gentle-like."

Dorothy, who felt sure that Wade was mortally hurt, struggled desperately, as she stepped inside, with the feeling of faintness which was reaching out to engulf her. She caught at a chair for support, and her mother hurried forward, the picture of despair herself.

"My precious lamb, go lie down! Oh, when I think——

"Don't talk to me!" Dorothy waved her back, for the presence close to her of another person could only mean her collapse. "I'm all right. I'm of no consequence now. He needs a doctor," she added to Santry, who had turned away from the bed, bowed with grief. He, too, thought that Wade would never be himself again.

"I'll go," said Barker, eager to do something useful to atone for his absence at the critical moment, but Santry rounded upon him like a starved lion.

"You—you whelp!" he snarled, and gestured fiercely to the form on the bed. "He left you here to look after things and you—you went blackberrying!" Barker seemed so crushed by the anathema of the charge that Dorothy's sympathy was stirred.

"It wasn't Barker's fault," she said quickly. "There seemed to be no danger. Gordon said so himself. But one of you go immediately for the doctor."

"I'll go," Santry responded, and hurried from the room, followed by Barker, thoroughly wretched.

Dorothy went over to the bed and keenly scrutinized Wade's features; then kneeling beside it, she said a little prayer to the God of all men to be merciful to hers.

"Maybe, if I made you a cup of tea?" Mrs. Purnell anxiously suggested, but the girl shook her head. Tea was Mrs. Purnell's panacea for all things, despite the harm it had wrought to her own nerves.

"Don't bother me, mother. I—I've been through a good deal. I don't want to talk."

Mrs. Purnell stole sobbingly from the room, and Dorothy sat gently on the edge of the bed, so as not to disturb the sufferer and yet be instantly ready to meet his need. She had sat so for nearly an hour, when Wade slowly opened his eyes.

"What is it?" She bent tenderly over him, forgetting her own fatigue in her eagerness to serve him. His lips moved flutteringly.

"Is it you?" He groped with his hand for her fingers.

"Yes," she said, restraining the sob in her throat for his sake. "Is there anything you want? What can I do for you?"

He shook his head slightly to mean that he wanted nothing.

"It's all right, if it's you," he said weakly, after a moment. "You're all right—always!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SUN ONCE MORE.

AFTER these few words to Dorothy, the sufferer lapsed into coma again, in which he was found by the physician, who returned with Santry from Moondance. During the long intervening hours the girl had not moved from the bedside, although the strain of her own experience with Moran was making itself felt in her intense nervous fatigue.

"Go rest yourself," Santry urged. "It's my turn now."

"I'm not tired," she said, trying to smile into the keen eyes of the physician, who had heard the facts from the old cattle man.

Wade lay with his eyes closed, apparently in profound coma, but gave signs of consciousness when Dr. Catlin gently shook him. Dorothy felt that he should not be disturbed, although she kept her own counsel, but Catlin wanted to see if he could arouse his patient at all, for the extent of the injury caused by the bullet, which had entered the back in the vicinity of the spinal cord, could be gauged by the amount of sensibility remaining. The ranchman was finally induced to answer monosyllabically the questions put to him, but he did so with surly impatience. The physician then made a thorough examination, for which he was better fitted than many a fashionable city practitioner, by reason of familiarity with gunshot wounds, and [illegible]

Santry, who had watched him as a cat does a mouse, forced himself to speak, for his throat was dry as a bone.

"Well, Doc, how about it?"

"Oh, he's not going to die, but he may [illegible] there some while. So far as I can [illegible] the bullet [illegible] grazed the spinal [illegible] and it [illegible] at he's feel-[illegible] A [illegible] would [illegible] [illegible]"

Santry [illegible] over his [illegible]

[illegible] God A'mighty could 'a' let a skunk like Moran do a thing like that! [illegible] voice swelled as though the truth he was about to utter exceeded the first—"and then let the varmint get away from me!"

Catlin nodded sympathy with the sentiment and turned to Dorothy. She had been anxiously searching his face to discover if he were encouraging them unduly, and when she felt that he was not stretching the fact in his prognosis, a tremendous weight was lifted from her mind.

"You are going to stay here?" he asked.

"Yes, oh, yes!" she said.

"That's good." He opened his medicine case and mixed a simple antipyretic. "I'll tell you what to do then. After that, you'd better get some rest. Wade'll not be wanting much for some days, except medical care."

"I'm not tired," she repeated, at which he shrewdly smiled.

"I'm not asking you if you're tired. I'm telling you that you are. You've got Wade to consider first, and you can't look after him unless you keep well yourself."

He explained to her what she was to do for the patient, and gave her a stimulant to offset the effects of her own nervous shock. Then, counseling them not to be too greatly distressed, for there would be no fatal outcome from the ranchman's injury, Catlin mounted his horse and rode back to town. Such journeys were all in the day's work to [illegible] and poor pay they usually brought [illegible] except as love of his fellow-men [illegible] his spirit.

During the long days that followed, Dorothy scarcely left Wade's bedside, for to her mother now fell the burden of the ranch household. From feeling that she never would be equal to the task of cooking for so many men, Mrs. Purnell came to find her health greatly improved by her tasks, which left her little opportunity for morbid introspection.

Santry, too, was in almost constant attendance upon the sick man, and was as tender and solicitous in his ministrations as Dorothy herself. He ate little and slept less, relieving his feelings by oaths whispered into his mustache. He made the ranch hands move about their duties as quietly as mice. Dorothy grew to be genuinely fond of him, and touched by their common bond of sympathy with Wade. Frequently they sat in the sickroom together, reading the newspapers, which accumulated day by day. On one such occasion, when Santry had twisted his mouth awry in determined effort to fold the paper he was reading, without permitting it a single crackle, she softly laughed at him.

"You needn't be so careful. I hardly think it would disturb him."

The old fellow sagely shook his head. "I ain't taking no chances."

A moment afterward he tiptoed over to her, grinning from ear to ear, and with a clumsy finger pointed out an item he had been pondering over. An expression of surprise flooded her face; they laughed softly together; and, learning that he was through with the paper, she put it away in a drawer of the bureau, meaning to show the item sometime to Gordon.

Under the care of Catlin, who rode out each day from the town, and her careful nursing, the ranchman was at last brought out of his coma and started once more on the road to health. He was mighty pale, but the one danger that Catlin had feared and kept to himself, the danger of blood-poisoning, was now definitely past, and the patient's physical resource was ample to bring about recovery, without the extraction of the bullet.

"Some of it you owe to yourself, Wade, as a reward of decent living, and some of it you owe to the Lord," Catlin said smilingly. "But the most of it you owe to this little girl here." He patted Dorothy on the shoulder and would not permit her to shirk his praise. "She's been your nurse, and I can tell you, it isn't a pleasant job for a woman, tending a wound like that."

"She's a wonderful girl," said Wade, tenderly.

"Oh, you just think that because I'm the only girl around here," she blushingly interposed, while the physician laughed heartily.

"There was another girl about here," Wade reminded her.

He was well enough now to receive his

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FREE!

Wonderful [illegible] dyspepsia [illegible] indigestion [illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] over twenty thousand [illegible] cured [illegible]

[illegible]cClellan, M. [illegible] L. L. D., [illegible] as one [illegible] is in the annals of modern [illegible]

[illegible] DIGESTOIDS [illegible] you can eat what you [illegible] [illegible] fear of unpleasant consequences. Send us $1 [illegible] will send you a LARGE BOX express prepaid [illegible] cheerfully refunded if you are not [illegible] write for FREE illustrated booklet.

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Don't Wire Your Harness
When You Can Get a Lock-Stitch Pocket Sewing Machine
FREE

This little machine never gets out of order and will fit into any tool box on the farm. It sews a perfect lock-stitch on anything from harness to carpets. The handle is hollow, fitted with a screw cap and furnished with a spool of waxed thread, straight and curved needles. It is made of the best steel and mahogany.

We will send this awl to any one free of charge when we receive $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to the Blade or Ledger. Canada price $1.5 a year. We pay the postage. We do not pay duty to Canada.

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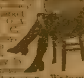
AGENTS
MEN OR WOMEN

Make $6 to $12 a day this summer. Sell Concentrated Soft Drinks—[illegible] Enormous demand—wanted everywhere. Delicious, refreshing [illegible] drinks for the home, picnics, parties, [illegible] games etc. Every popular drink. Orangeade, Lemonade, Wild Cherry, Strawberry, Apple Cider and others. Concentrated form—small package [illegible] less than 1 cent a glass. Always ready, just mix [illegible] water. Guaranteed under U. S. Pure Food Laws. AGENTS COINING MONEY. Woods made $[illegible] first day. [illegible] took 1[illegible] orders in two days. Over 1[illegible]% profit. Sell to a dozen [illegible] soft drink stands, stores etc. [illegible] sellers. The big season is on—get busy. Territory going fast. Complete outfit of Zanol Products [illegible] case free. [illegible]

American Products Co. 2510 Third St. Cincinnati O.

AGENTS: $40 A WEEK



introducing Wonderful New Hosiery Line for men, women and children.

GUARANTEED ONE YEAR

Must wear and give satisfaction or replaced free. [illegible] The finest line on the market. Agents, [illegible] O. A. [illegible] $17 first week. C. [illegible] $1[illegible] D. [illegible] $8 to $12 a [illegible] Mrs. M. [illegible] makes big money in spare time. G. W. [illegible] $[illegible]. Your territory open. Write quick for [illegible] sample [illegible] free to workers.

Thomas Hosiery Co., 1917 Oak St., Dayton, Ohio

AGENTS Let us show you the best [illegible] Write today to the largest makers of transparent handled knives and razors for proof. A postal card will do.

$1500 a year

NOVELTY CUTLERY CO. 23 Bar St. CANTON, OHIO

AGENTS SEND 12 CENTS NOW For handsome sample German silver Key Check with your name and address stamped thereon. Big Commissions for taking orders. We also supply blank Checks and stamping outfits. HART MFG. CO., Dept. A. 303 Degraw Street, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

BIG MAIL FREE!

POST OFFICE

Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufac- [illegible] of sending samples, advertising matter. [illegible]

AGENTS DIRECTORY LIST [illegible] Directory List [illegible] Agents Directory List [illegible]

Agent's Directory List, Indiana. Pa.

friends on brief visits, and Trowbridge was amongst the first to drop in on him. Dorothy did not mind having Lem, but she was not sure she enjoyed having the others, for she had found the close association with Gordon so very sweet; but she told herself that she would not be jealous, and cordially welcomed there all who came. Naturally, so pretty a girl doing the honors of the house so well, and so closely linked with the fortunes of the host, gave rise to the usual deductions. Many were the quiet jokes which the cattle men passed amongst themselves over the approaching wedding, and the fete they would turn the occasion into.

"Well, good-by, Miss Purnell," said Trowbridge one day, smilingly, and yet with a curiously pathetic droop to his mouth.

"Miss Purnell!" exclaimed Dorothy, as she shook hands with him on the porch.

"That's what I said." He nodded wisely. "Good-by, Miss Purnell." Refusing to be envious of his friend's good fortune, he laughed cheerily and was gone before she saw through his little joke.

The next afternoon she was reading to Gordon when the far-away look in his eyes assured her that he was not listening. She stopped, wondering what he could be thinking about, and missing the sound of her voice, he turned his eyes toward her.

"You weren't even listening!" she said smilingly.

"I was thinking that I never had a chance to get into those church-going clothes," he said, with a return of the old whimsical mood. "But I look pretty clean, don't I?"

"Yes," she answered, suddenly shy.

"Hair brushed? Scarf right? Boots clean?"

At each question she had nodded. Her heart was beating rapidly, and color was mounting to the roots of her hair, but she refused to lower her eyes in panic. She looked him straight in the face, with a sweet, tender, cool gaze.

"Yes," she said again.

"Well, then, give us your hand." He took both her hands in his, hitching his rocking-chair forward so as to be near her. "Dorothy, I've got something to tell you. I guess you know what it is." Her eyes suddenly grew moist as she playfully shook her head. "Oh, yes, you do, girl, but I've got to say it, haven't I? I love you. It sort of chokes me to say it, because my heart's so full."

"Mine is, too," she whispered, a queer catch in her throat. "But are you sure you love me?"

"Sure? Why, that other was only——

[illegible] drawing her hand from his clasp, she held her fingers for an instant over his lips.

"I've got something to show you," she said.

She went to the bureau, and taking out the paper which she had placed there, brought it to him. It was a moment before she could find the item again; then she pointed it out to Wade. They read it together, as she and Santry had done. The item was an announcement from the Rexhills of the engagement of their daughter, Helen, to Mr. Maxwell Frayne.

Dorothy watched Wade's face eagerly, and was quite happy when she saw there no trace of his former sentiment for Helen Rexhill. He expressed genuine pleasure that Helen was not to be carried down with her father's ruin, but Dorothy knew that otherwise the item had left him untouched. She had thought that this would be so, but she was comforted to be assured of it.

Why, that was only an infatuation. Now I'm really in love. Thank Heaven, I [illegible] When she looked at him, there was a light in her glorious, violet-shaded eyes that took his breath away.

"Hush, dear!" she said softly. "You've said enough. I understand, and I'm so——"

The rest was lost to the world as his arms went about her!

The End.

* * *

A Critical Guest.

He didn't want a room at all, apparently, though he said he would like to see what the single rooms were like when he approached Assistant Manager Wood. The latter personally conveyed him to one of the compartments for solitary gentlemen, threw up the window, and then stood by to enjoy the effect.

H'm!" said the visitor. Then he strode across the floor to the dressing table, and while the assistant manager stood regarding him with something approaching anxiety, he pulled out the middle drawer. From his pocket he drew a fresh, neatly folded handkerchief. This he passed along to the inside of the drawer.

"H'm!" he remarked again. He went to the bed and pulled it out, and, stooping, ran his handkerchief along the top of the marble washboard that had been behind the bed.

"They usually forget that spot," he explained to the hotel man, who by this time had sized him up. "Well," he added, straightening up, "I must hand it to you. I have been in only one other hotel during my experience where my handkerchief has not gathered dust from one or both of these places."

Then he imparted the information that some time he might come and take a room.

Suspicious Acts.

"Why, David!"

"Huh?" remarked the individual addressed, continuing his labors.

"Why, David!" his mother repeated, somewhat anxiously. "Whatever is the matter? You washed up before dinner—why on earth are you doing it over again?"

Through the enveloping lather the boy's complexion showed a bright pink. But, then, sunburn is pink, naturally. "Oh, I dunno," he said gruffly. "Can't a fellow be clean? You're always fussing at me because I ain't clean enough!"

Stricken dumb by the spectacle of her son's not only enduring, but actually seeking, soap and water, his mother wavered onward from the open bathroom door. On David's bed lay his newest blue negligee shirt and a handful of ties.

"Wh-wh-why, David!" she was about to stammer again, and then thought better of it. Retiring to her room, she sat down and gazed, still anxiously, through the open door. From the bathroom she could hear the sound of a shoe polisher vigorously wielded. David's mother put one bewildered hand to her head.

Only the other day she and David had conducted a debate on the subject, "Resolved, That shining one's shoes is a totally unnecessary, foppish and annoying habit to be shunned by all really manly, sensible persons."

David, reaching the front porch at last, glittered. He resembled the most valeted of matinee heroes. There was a new band on his straw hat and the fragrance of his mother's most expensive perfume was wafted from him. From the upper pocket of his coat a blue-edged handkerchief, matching his shirt, peeped jauntily. His socks matched the handkerchief.

"Say!" exploded his older brother, after a breathless survey of the glory that was David, "those are my socks you have on! What the deuce——"

"Aw," David interrupted, hastily sidling down the steps. "I won't hurt 'em none!"

"Where're you going, David?" cried his mother, half rising. David was at the gate.

"David!" roared his father, awake to the situation.

David vanished completely from sight

"Well, what do you know about that?" gasped David's perturbed family.

David walked rapidly till he was two blocks away. Then he paused and with an extra handkerchief from his trousers pocket carefully dusted his shoes. With still another handkerchief he wiped his steaming brow and the inside of his collar. Shaking his shoulders straight, he marched on. His gait became slower. Four blocks away he picked up and progressed rapidly, eyes straight ahead, but at the end of the block he turned and slowly walked back. Once his feet faltered a bit and his head half turned toward a large stone house. Then he hurried on. Reaching the other end of the block, he about faced and walked back again.

At the hedge before the stone house David paused and examined the foliage carefully. He broke off a twig and bit it, frowning. Yes, the wood was green—the hedge was alive. He looked toward the house and then bolted down the street. There had been signs of people on the large veranda.

At the corner David dusted his shoes again and again essayed the stone house. He actually turned in at the walk and advanced five feet, then suddenly pausing, pretending he had heard a hail from the street, quavered, "Oh, hullo, Bill!" and bolted outside the hedge again.

Finally David, appearing from behind the hedge, shot down the walk toward the house. He wavered a bit from side to side. His head was held high and he breathed hard. The perspiration stood on his brow and his hands were clutched into hard balls. He almost fell against the screen door.

"Wh-why, it's David!" some one said from inside.

"G' evenin'," David gasped in a hoarse voice. "I came—is Sis-Sis-Cecilia at home?"

"I'm so sorry, David," said the young lady's mother. "But she's gone riding this evening with her sister!"

"Aw, never mind!" David gulped and streaked it back down the walk.

"Now, young man," said his father when David appeared home, "what's the meaning of all this? Where have you been and what

"Aw, I ain't been anywhere!" David growled gloomily. "I jus' took a walk. Honest! And you can have your darned old socks, Alex—they ain't so much, anyhow!—I'm going to bed!"

* * *

Useless Neutrality.

"You knew we had a French maid and German butler?"

"Yes."

"Well, we've been worried over them ever since the war broke out. We took the greatest pains to set them an example of neutrality. We were afraid all the time that it would be impossible to keep them from flying at each other. Of course we were careful not to discuss the war before them. In short, we've been taking a whole lot of trouble for months to help them keep the peace. I can't begin to tell you how careful we were. And what do you suppose happened yesterday?"

"Why, a pitched battle."

"Nothing of the sort. It seems the two were engaged long before the war broke out, and yesterday they were married."

* * *

Our Flag.

Fling it from mast and steeple,
  Symbol o'er land and sea
Of the life of a happy people
  Gallant and young and free.
Proudly we view its colors,
  Flag of the brave and true,
With the clustered stars and the steadfast bars,
  The red, the white and the blue.

Flag of the fearless hearted,
  Flag of the broken chain,
Flag in a day-dawn starred,
  Never to pale or wane.
Dearly we prize its colors,
  With the heaven light breaking through,
The clustered stars and the steadfast bars,
  The red, the white, and the blue

Flag of the sturdy fathers,
  Flag of the loyal sons,
Beneath its folds it gathers
  Earth's best and noblest ones
Boldly we wave its colors,
  Our veins are thrilled anew
By the steadfast bars, the clustered stars,
  The red, the white and the blue.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

* * *

Popular Appeal.

"The Declaration of Independence is a noble document."

"Yes. But a lot of people have failed to memorize it. Don't you think it would have been more effective if it had been set to music or illustrated with comic pictures?"

$2.50 a Month

The masterpiece of watch manufacture—adjusted to the second, positions, temperature and isochronism. Encased at factory into your choice of the exquisite new watch cases.

19 Jewel Burlington

All sizes for both [illegible]

The great Burlington Watch sent on simple request. Pay at rate of $2.50 a month. You get the watch at the same price even the wholesale jeweler must pay.

Write Today for Free Watch Book

See handsome color illustrations of all the newest designs in watches that y[illegible] from [illegible]

Burlington Watch Co. Dept. [illegible] 19th & Marshall Blvd. Chicago

WANTED—MALE HELP—SALESMEN

Can use several young men to train for road positions. Will pay moderate salary to start. Splendid chance for promotion. Chicago V. S. Co., Steger Bldg., Chicago

55 Valuable Formulas, Tricks, Illusions, and Household Hints in our interesting magazine for two issues SENT COMPLETE FOR 10c
J. F. Williams, 105 14th St., College Point, N. Y.

AUTOMOBILE Would you like to win a Touring Car? Send postal for particulars. J. LUCAS, Red Cross, Pa.

PATENTS—WATSON E. COLEMAN, Washington, D. C. Books free. Highest references. Best results.

GOVERNMENT Positions are easy to get. My free booklet X1013 tells how. Write today—NOW. EARL HOPKINS, Washington, D. C.

CARDS Read as fast as you deal, see your man three or four down. Free catalog. B. VINE & CO., Swanton, Ohio

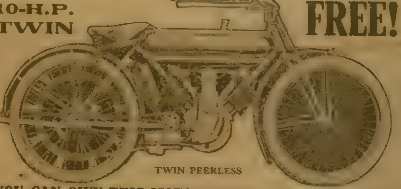
MONEY Made quickly by smart men. T. Artol Co., 115 Nassau St., NY.

CARDS Dice, Magic Goods, Novelties. Catalog Free. B. L. SMYTHE CO., NEWARK, MO.

MENDING TISSUE THE WONDER OF THE AGE. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, mackintoshes, umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 10 cents, three packages, 25 cents. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

$275.00 MOTORCYCLE FREE!

10-H.P. TWIN



TWIN PEERLESS

YOU CAN OWN THIS MOTORCYCLE Just join the HOME LIFE Motorcycle Club, and learn how to get it. We have devised a plan whereby any member of our club can win this new $275.00 10-H. P. Twin Peerless Motorcycle with very little effort.

Every Man and Boy in the United States, except those living in the Postal District of Chicago, are welcome to join our club. We know that you would like to own a Motorcycle, especially when **it won't cost you one cent.**

The Peerless 10-H. P. Twin for 1915 is the nearest approach to the ideal Motorcycle yet produced. For speed, endurance, and comfort, it has no equal. The Peerless Twin is a motorcycle that is certainly worth owning. Don't delay. Send us a postal or letter for particulars at once, so that you may receive our "Peerless Plan," by return mail.

HOME LIFE MOTORCYCLE CLUB, 646 N. La Salle St., CHICAGO

Knit Wool Shawls *White or —Red—*

FREE!

We have made a contract with one of the big mills for a lot of woolen shawls.

We are going to give these shawls away to our readers.

The shawls are made of woolen yarn. They come in two colors, white or red. These shawls can be used in many ways: as a shoulder shawl, like that shown in the cut, or they can be used to throw over the head

These shawls are large and well-made, and we want every reader of this paper to have one of them, so we will send you one FREE OF ALL CHARGE, if you enclose $1.00 for a year's subscription to either the Blade or Ledger.

We send the shawl all charges prepaid Be sure to state whether you want white or red.

This is a splendid offer, and we are glad to be able to distribute these shawls among our readers.

We treat old and new subscribers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber please say so when you write, and we will have your new subscription commence when the old one expires.

Cut out this adv. and send with your money. Canadian subscriptions $1.50 a year for each paper.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY, 500 N. Dearborn Street, CHICAGO, ILL.

The Fourth.

All honor to the small boy, with his unbounded patriotism, and his flag raisings, and his procession of "horribles," and his ceaseless shouting and cheering—and we will give him what pennies we can afford, and keep as far out of his track as possible until he gets through with his celebrating.

But the older people of this country do not want to forget the Fourth of July. Once, not so long ago, either, that was the day of all days to the people of these United States. It was talked about for weeks and months before it was due on the calendar to put in an appearance. Everybody hoped it would not be too hot, and that it would not rain, and that there would be no thunder showers to spoil the fireworks.

New dresses were made for the Fourth. Hats, for males and females, made their first appearance before the public on the Fourth. Children were early in the year promised that if they would be good, they should go to the celebration in the grove, or in the city, as the case might be.

Let us have once more some of those good old-fashioned celebrations. We are wont to laugh at the spread-eagle style of oratory which once prevailed on these Fourth of July occasions. But we cannot have too much display of enthusiasm where our country is concerned.

It is the best country in the world, and we know it; and all the rest of creation knows it, too. Compare its conditions with the conditions of other so-called Christian countries, and it is Heaven by way of contrast. It is the nearest approach to paradise—before the fall—that can be found upon this earth.

It is the country where every man's conscience is free! The country where education is for all—the poor as well as the rich; the country where the son of a beggar may be a monarch, if he has it in him to be a leader. The country where woman takes, unquestioned, her rightful place by the side of man, and is at liberty to follow her inclinations toward advancement in any direction she pleases. It is the country where no oppression is tolerated. The country where right and justice prevail. The country where Virtue walks abroad in her white garments, and says to Vice, "Though you wear robes of gold, and strew diamonds on your pathway, get you hence, for in my domain you shall find no favor!"

God bless America! Even as He has blessed it for a hundred years and more!

Prosper our South, with its new hopes and industries—prosper our West as it pushes its way to the Pacific slopes—prosper our East and our North, and make of us a people who shall take deep down into our hearts the truth that never in all God's fair universe can there be another country so beautiful, and so dear to us as this—our own native land.

* * *

A Living Wonder.

Pensively Patrick gazed into the pigsty and fixed his eye and knitted his brow on the fat little object that snugly snorted to itself.

"M'm!" he muttered, as shifting into a different position he viewed the piglet from another angle.

Along came Betty O'Hoyle, but not even her pretty face could lure Patrick from his contemplations.

"An' how's the pig, Pat?" she asked, slightly piqued by his indifference.

"He's a livin' wonder!" came the emphatic answer.

"Shure, an' how's that, Patrick?" inquired Betty, drawing nearer the sty.

"Bejabbers," exclaimed the contemplative one, "he's just guzzled two pailfuls of milk, and then I put him in the pail and he didn't half fill it!"

* * *

Almost Alone.

He came home and found his young wife dissolved in tears.

"What do you think has happened?" she cried. "I left the cage open and our canary has flown away."

He undertook to give what consolation he might and took the poor distressed lady in his arms. As she nestled against his shoulder a new access of sobs convulsed her.

"Ah, George," she murmured, in a choking voice, "now I've only you left."

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

WHO ARE YOU? PROVE IT AT BANKS, etc., by photo-identification credentials (in fine leather pocketbook) furnished with $2,000 accident insurance policy; pays benefits for injuries or sickness, total cost $5 per year; double benefits $10. Agents wanted. Highest commissions. Address Underwriters, 1346 Insurance Exchange, Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS—NEW MIGHTY MONEY-MAKING marvel. World startled. New marvelous clothes washing crystal. Clothes washing ideas revolutionized, positively abolishes rubbing, washboards, washing machines; women astounded, wild over it, absolutely harmless. $1,000 guarantee goes with it. Make $50 to $100 weekly easy. Marshall of Pa., amazed. Telegraphs "rush 5,000 packages." Exclusive [illegible]; own a business; supply customers, [illegible] hty elements [illegible] Write today—get over- [illegible] free. Equitable Corporation, [illegible] Superior, Chicago.

AGENTS—SNAPPIEST HOUSEHOLD LINE [illegible]

AGENTS—SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED 36x68 rugs, $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 116 in 4 days. Profit $57. You can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. Sample rug by parcel post prepaid, 98c. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

AGENTS WANTED—EITHER SEX—MAKE [illegible]

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS RELIAble men and women to sell guaranteed hosiery, underwear, shirts, etc., to homes. Big profits. Send reference. $10 sample line free. Madison Mills, 588 Broadway, New York City.

$5.00 DAILY GUARANTEED HUSTLERS IN [illegible] nover. Territory [illegible] Drolo Manufacturing [illegible]

A DOLLAR A MINUTE CAN'T BE MADE, but good money can, with quick sellers not in stores. Write "Show Me!" S. Mfg. Co., 11 Warren St., N. Y. Dept.

HAVE FUN—NEW 25c JOKE AND FUN catalogue for 10c. Variety Company, [illegible]

$22.50 PER WEEK AND EXPENSES TO travel appointing agents for us. Send stamp. Box 307, Shelby, N. C.

HELP WANTED

MEN AND WOMEN WANTED EVERYwhere. Government jobs. $70 month. [illegible] Vacations. Rapid advancement. [illegible] Write immediately for list of [illegible] Franklin Institute, Dept [illegible] N. Y.

LEARN TELEGRAPHY. YOUNG WOMEN and young men [illegible] and secure for [illegible] J. A. Sheridan, Sup't [illegible]

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR FARMERS' names. Send dime for contract. Sun. [illegible]

MALE HELP WANTED

WANTED. MEN AND WOMEN TO QUALIfy for Government positions. Several thousand appointments to be made next few [illegible] all information about openings, how to prepare, etc., free. Write immediately for booklet G-1034 Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

$10 PER 100 UPWARD PAID TACKING [illegible] Send 6c stam [illegible] ritory. [illegible] non, N. [illegible]

WANTED—MAN TO REPRESENT US IN your own territory; $85.00 per month travel [illegible] and commission. Experience [illegible] Write quick. R. D. Martel, 2909 [illegible] L. A. C., Chicago.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. [illegible] by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN AND BRAKEMEN; $100 MONTHly, experience unnecessary; hundreds needed by the best railroads everywhere. Particulars free. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

MEN WOMEN WANTED $75.00 MONTH. [illegible] Institute, Dept. A-17 [illegible] N. Y.

WANTED: MEN TO GET MEMBERS AND establish lodges on [illegible] basis for [illegible] Bend, [illegible]

MALE HELP—(Continued)

HUSTLERS—$20 TO $30 MADE WEEKLY distributing circulars, samples, tacking [illegible] Advertisers' National Agency, [illegible], Chicago.

BE A DETECTIVE; EARN $50 TO $100 weekly; travel all over the world. Write Dept. 115, United States Detective and Adjusting Agency, Railway Exchange, St. Louis.

BE A DETECTIVE—EARN $25 TO $75 weekly; see the world with expenses paid. Write Loraine Detective System, Inc., Dept. 213A, Boston, Mass.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THOROugh instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

A RARE OPPORTUNITY MAKE COMFORT- [illegible]

LADIES—A FASCINATING HOME BUSIness; tinting postcards, pictures, etc., spare time; make $12 weekly, no canvassing; samples 10c; particulars free. Artint, 386 F. 130 Manhtn. St., New York.

LADIES—MAKE SHIELDS AT HOME, $10 per 100; no canvassing required. Send stamped addressed envelope for particulars. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Mich.

LADIES DO SEWING AT HOME, MATERial furnished; no canvassing; steady work. Acme Sales Co., Dept. 43, Denver, Colo.

FEMALE AGENTS WANTED

LADY AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY TOWN and city in the United States. Address, Mrs. W. C. Smartt, Boswell, Okla.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$1 MAY START YOUR FORTUNE. MILlions of dollars being made in Texas Oil field near Houston, where we have started drilling big co-operative oil well. Lots 25x100 feet, "Bryan's Oil Subdivision," only $1 cash, $1 monthly. Price $20. You get warranty deed to lots and share in profits from well now drilling, which may be gusher paying $3,000 or more daily. Similar lots have sold for $5,000 to $10,000 when wells developed. Write owners for free literature, etc., telling about new plan. Sales to close in about three weeks. C. A. Bryan & Company, 266 First National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

$7.50 MAY MAKE YOU $750.00. LOTS IN Triangle Oil Subdivision only $1 cash, $1 monthly before co-operative well is drilled. Near the big gusher oil fields where millions have been made. Write for free literature. Triangle Oil Co., 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make mboney—to better yourself—to buy, sell, or exchange goods or services are offered here.

$10 INVESTMENT IN LAND AND CO-OPErative oil well may make $1,000, payments $1 [illegible] For particulars address Texas- [illegible] Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

INVEST $1 MONTHLY IN LOT AT HOUSton Hot Well, health resort suburban to Houston, fastest growing city in Southwest. Values advancing rapidly. Price for short time $20. Write for literature. Houston Hot Well Company, 560 Commercial Bank Building, Houston [illegible]

NAMES

WE PAY 25C EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. A-Directory, Grand Rapids, Mich.

FLORIDA FARM LANDS

ABSOLUTELY FREE. 100 FARMS TO BE given away; soil, climate, transportation and market facilities perfect. Send 4c postage for application blanks. Southland Seminary Endowment, Box 534, St. Petersburg, Fla.

FOR SALE

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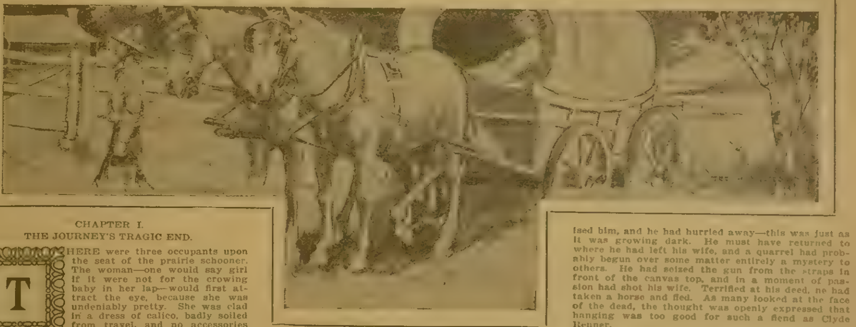
The Prairie Schooner

A Hawkeye Pioneer Tragedy and Its Strange Results



By Willis E. Link

Author of "The Clam Digger," etc.

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CHAPTER I.
THE JOURNEY'S TRAGIC END.

THERE were three occupants upon the seat of the prairie schooner. The woman—one would say girl if it were not for the crowing baby in her lap—would first attract the eye, because she was undeniably pretty. She was clad in a dress of calico, badly soiled from travel, and no accessories of fashion hid the perfect figure, which was evident from the tiny foot, with its calfskin shoe resting upon the dashboard, to the bare head with its mass of disordered hair, too red to be strictly auburn. The escaping strands, tossed about by the wind and the motion of the wagon, shone in the sun as if some of the silken threads were of gleaming gold. A lily-white complexion was only a trifle darkened by weeks of outdoor life—just enough to give an attractive glow of health. The big blue eyes looked out on the world with hope and trust, and looking into their depths one could read a love for the good, the true, and the beautiful. The face was all animation, and the small mouth was for scarcely a moment closed, for there was so much to talk about.

The man driving the team was big and [illegible] ended people are supposed to be endowed with. The almost [illegible] d a slight droop, as if [illegible] was not a particularly [illegible]

[illegible] the pair and their [illegible] the time through the autumn-tinted woods skirting the Iowa River. They had finally turned more to the west and traversed a region where the timber was heavier, extending along and back from tributary to the river. This road was hilly [illegible] had been reached, the open prairie could be seen to the west. On the edge of the timber they came to a farmhouse with its typical surroundings.

The man descended from the prairie schooner, and with a small tin pail in his hand started for the dwelling. He stopped and glanced around a moment before ascending a slight elevation where a gate opened into the yard. He observed a house, evidently built several years before, that was more commodious than most of the settlers' cabins springing up on the prairies. Back and to one side of the dwelling was a small barn built of rough lumber. Several corn cribs constructed of fence rails stood not far from the barn, while farther back was a shed made of posts and rails and covered with straw piled upon and around the framework when the fall threshing was done. All in all, the place was evidently the home of a farmer in better circumstances than the great majority of his fellows.

The man, hearing an admonition from the wagon to "hurry up," rapidly walked to the door of the house and rapped. Almost immediately it was opened by a man who was undoubtedly the owner of the premises.

"I have stopped to see if I can buy a little milk," stated the traveler, as he held out his pail.

"Certainly," replied the farmer, as he took the pail and handed it to a woman who stood behind him.

"Our baby has not been weaned long, so we get fresh milk for her wherever we can," said the man outside the door, more for the sake of saying something than because he thought the information would be of interest.

"Just the thing to do," assented the farmer. "How far have you come?" he continued, as he stepped upon the small porch outside the door.

"From Marshall County, Indiana," was the reply. If the speaker had noticed the questioner, an expression of a sudden interest would not have been lost.

"And this is Marshall County, Iowa," exclaimed the farmer. "Are you going to settle here?" came the next question.

"I hardly think so. I think I shall go about a hundred miles northwest, and if I can't get a homestead, then probably I can buy a piece of land for two or three dollars an acre. However, I don't know what I may do, for any day I might strike something and decide to stop and i[illegible]"

"What is your name?" The interrogation came suddenly from the farmer.

"Clyde Renner."

If the last speaker had glanced at the other man he would not have failed to perceive the expression of startled surprise. But at this moment the woman of the house came to the door and handed out the pail of milk. In her arm she carried a baby, and another about three years old toddled behind and peered from the mother's dress. It was all very commonplace, but the wheels of awful destiny turned the faster from this moment.

"I find that all natural groves have a name," said Renner, turning to the farmer. "What do they call this?" and he swept his hand to the north and east.

"Hazel Green," was the answer. "No, you don't have to pay for the milk," he went on, as Renner dug his hand into his pocket.

"Many thanks." As the "mover" turned to leave, he stopped and spoke again.

"It is 'most sundown, and I believe we will camp for the night while we are by the timber. I shall look around some, and if I can get two or three days' work, I will do it. This will be a rest for my wife, and it might be that I would decide to locate in this section. This looks like such a beautiful country," Renner concluded enthusiastically.

"Lots of prairie for miles west of here to be settled," responded the farmer, but there was no answering enthusiasm. The next moment the man from Indiana was hurrying back to the prairie schooner.

The farmer watched the "movers" drive on. After going a short distance the wagon turned from the main traveled road. It was evident that Renner had noticed a grassy plot on the edge of the timber and would camp there for the night. In a few minutes the covered wagon disappeared behind a clump of trees. The watcher then started toward the barn, calling to his wife that he was going to begin the chores.

Where the Renners camped was in view of a portion of the road they had been traveling along. Before dark that night several who drove over the same ground noticed the prairie schooner standing by the trees and the unharnessed horses grazing at the grass the frost had not yet injured. A fire had been built, and Renner and his wife were seen preparing and eating supper. As it began to grow dark, all seemed quiet around the covered wagon. It must have been about this time that a shot rang out, but it was unheard by the few widely-scattered dwellers in the neighborhood.

As the sun arose the next morning another beautiful day was promised. Quite early John Woods started from his cabin, a couple of miles out on the prairie, to drive to the gristmill on the Iowa River. At the edge of Hazel Green he noticed a prairie schooner, with a horse grazing nearby. Carelessly glancing at the scene, he paid but slight attention, for such pictures were common in those days. In fact, he and his family had traveled from Illinois to their present home in a similar "ship of the prairie." Something unusual suddenly caught his sight, however, and in growing wonder he pulled up his team.

"Looks like a woman asleep on the ground," he muttered, "and it is a funny place for a person to sleep, as cool as the nights are now."

John Woods felt that he had better investigate. Tying his team to a scrub tree by the side of the road, he struck across to the apparently sleeping woman. Then he received the shock of his life. The woman was not asleep, but dead. Her bloody clothing and a shotgun lying upon the ground told the story. It was murder.

The astounded man stood rooted to the spot—he never could tell for how long. With startled eyes he gazed at the marble-like face and the mass of silken hair showing red and gold in the sun. He doubted at first glance if it were really the eternal sleep, but a glimpse of the blood-soaked bosom left no room for uncertainty. A faint cry came from the covered wagon, and Woods looked in under the canvas top. In the back part of the wagon a bed had been made for the night, and upon this lay a baby almost unconscious from excessive sobbing. The kind-hearted man soon had the doll-like mite in his arms, and rushed to the nearest dwelling—Reuben Freeman's. This was where Clyde Renner had stopped for the milk. The story Woods told seemed a fearful shock to Freeman and his wife.

It is remarkable how news will travel through a sparsely inhabited country. In two hours a hundred persons were at the scene of the tragedy, and by noon the number was quadrupled. It was the general idea that the corpse must not be touched until the coroner arrived, so a blanket was thrown over the pitiful figure. Before night that official arrived and an inquest was held. By this time the case seemed plain to all. The woman had been murdered by her husband. He had then mounted one of the horses and fled. So the coroner's jury decided.

A thorough search had been made through the contents of the prairie schooner. Enough was found to show that the murdered woman was Nora, the wife of Clyde Renner, who was moving from Marshall County, Indiana. The word "Lucy" embroidered on some tiny garments was a plain indication of the baby's name.

It was learned that Clyde Renner had appeared at a dwelling half a mile from the camping-place and asked for two or three days' work. This was promised him, and he had hurried away—this was just as it was growing dark. He must have returned to where he had left his wife, and a quarrel had probably begun over some matter entirely a mystery to others. He had seized the gun from the straps in front of the canvas top, and in a moment of passion had shot his wife. Terrified at his deed, he had taken a horse and fled. As many looked at the face of the dead, the thought was openly expressed that hanging was too good for such a fiend as Clyde Renner.

The next day Nora Renner was laid away to rest forever in the [illegible] Hazel Green, [illegible] The [illegible] were [illegible] road were not [illegible] the State at that time, so it was not easy to apprehend the fleeing husband. As days went by, no news came of any arrest, and finally all efforts in this direction were dropped. The search seemed to be so useless. What was to become of Baby Lucy? The neighbors were surprised at the declaration of Reuben Freeman that he would give the forsaken mite a home. He was not particularly popular, and had never been credited with generosity or tenderness. He had bought and moved on his farm three years before, and since that time had made no apparent effort to be sociable with his neighbors. Now all felt that he had been misjudged [illegible] a warmer feeling to come into the hearts of his neighbors. He told of being formerly a resident of the same town in Indiana in which Nora Renner lived before her marriage. In fact, she had favored him by accepting his attentions at various times, but there was never anything serious between them. They had always been good friends. Now that her baby was left uncared for, he felt he must step forward and assume the burden for the sake of this old friendship.

Some effort was made to find relatives of Clyde and Nora Renner in Indiana, but nothing came of this. The court turned over the prairie schooner and horse to Reuben Freeman as the guardian of Lucy Renner. The "ship of the prairie" was hauled to a vacant spot in the rear of the Freeman dwelling, where it stood, as the years flew by, with no attempt to utilize it in any way. Weeds grew up around it, and the changing weather of the seasons had a noticeable effect. People wondered at this superstition of Reuben Freeman. Sometimes a wonder was expressed that God would let Clyde Renner so easily escape the clutches of the law. But His mills were grinding to bring forth results all in His own good time.

CHAPTER II.
SIXTEEN YEARS LATER.

AGAIN it was a beautiful October day, very similar to the one which had proved to be the last for Nora Renner sixteen years before. Back from the Freeman house a patch of potatoes had been plowed out, and a girl was busy gathering the tubers into a bucket. As she followed the furrow the plow had made, she would gather every potato in sight and scratch over the loose dirt to see if any were concealed beneath the surface. When the bucket was filled, she carried it to a pile near the center of the patch and poured out the contents. Nearly all day she had toiled, and her back was aching. Her old calico dress was covered with soil, and as she occasionally looked at her hands, she ruefully thought she never could get them clean again. But, after all, she would rather be where she was than at work in the house, and she would glance a little spitefully at the Freeman dwelling.

The continuation of this interesting story dealing with the mystery which surrounds a prairie schooner, will be found in next week's (July 10) issue of The Farming Business. This is a big weekly magazine in colors for all families interested in farming. It is full of good things from cover to cover. Place your order now with the Blade and Ledger agent to deliver The Farming Business to you each week.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Men without enemies have but few friends.

The homely girl's face is her chaperon.

You will never get ahead by following the crowd

A declaration of independence of coats in summer is in order.

And man is also the architect of most of his own misfortunes.

The Lord made woman and she made herself over into a lady.

You don't need bank references in order to borrow trouble.

If it wasn't for men, fewer women would dislike each other.

When a good man goes in for reform work he begins at home.

The man who drinks like a fish does not take kindly to water.

The average man's conscience is more [illegible]

Many a good reputation has been stabbed by a pointed tongue.

A man seldom knows what he doesn't want until after he acquires it.

But let the sluggard attend a picnic and the ant will surely come to him.

No wonder a woman seldom knows her own mind; she changes it so often.

All that any man has to do in order to attract attention is to make a fool of himself.

Many a man who knows that there is room at the top sits down and waits for the elevator.

And some people make us tired—because we can't run fast enough to get [illegible]

By the way, it is still lawful to twist the lion's tail and make the eagle scream on July 4.

Men are judged by their actions, women by their looks and mules and onions by their strength.

After it became apparent that clothing was the proper thing, it was Eve who said: "I told you so."

Any man who can hold a fussy baby for an hour without saying naughty words is in the same class with Job.

Girls should beware of young men who pose as candy kids; as husbands they are apt to develop into lemon drops.

There is a lot of unconscious humor concealed in the explanations of a baseball manager as to why his club failed to make good.

A happy and patriotic combination would be a fly swatter with a popgun attachment that would give a loud Fourth of July report at the instant of impact.

Home and Health

Fashion Notes.

Palest peach pink organdie makes a bewitching blouse.

Taffeta bodices are worn with white organdie skirts.

Sleeves long and close fitting are finished with white flaring cuffs.

Filmy waists of black lace over white chiffon have an air of smartness.

Grass lined blouses have twine decoration and are worn with sand-colored skirts.

This season's hat cannot be worn low on the head, but must sit well up, showing the hair.

A Victorian revival is the puffed sleeve coming midway between shoulder and elbow. Thus far these sleeves adorn only evening gowns, the long sleeve to the wrist being used on all bodices and blouses for day wear. Low-necked waists are filled in at the top with gathered tuckers—another dainty Victorian feature of dress—and the decollete is growing round instead of V-shaped as the season advances. Dimity and flowered organdie find special favor. The belle of 1830 veiled herself partly for coquetry and partly to protect her complexion, for tan was considered a disgrace then, as rough, red hands would be now. Over the quaint poke bonnets this summer will be thrown graceful veils in bordered and vine patterns and from the tiny hat floats a short, flaring veil, such as the 1830 belle affected.

Children's clothes are becoming more attractive year by year, and this season the designers for little folk have outdone themselves in the fashioning of quaint and charming little coats and frocks. Ready-made clothes for children have improved as much as those designed for grown-ups in recent years, and while the house seamstress is still a valuable aid in large families, a great many women now buy ready made almost everything their small girls and boys wear before they are well along in their teens. After that, the girl may need the services of her own dressmaker; but the boy may still depend upon ready-made suits a few years longer. The frock of the little girl always echoes the changing modes for her mamma or grown-up sister, though the resemblance is often very remote and scarcely noticeable. This season, for example, the full skirt so emphasized in woman's dress extends over into the children's province; and one sees dainty little party frocks having much more width of skirt, than those of last year. More fullness is also noticed in the lower part of the little coats of short or medium length.

❦

For the Housewife.

Neglected brass may be polished with a paste of powdered bath brick and oil. Take two pieces of the brick and rub together. This makes a finer powder than if scraped with a knife.

For ginger flavoring cut up two ounces of white ginger root into a half pint of then strain into another bottle and cork tightly and let stand for several weeks; then strain into another bottle and cork again.

The hot plate of the kitchen stove may be cracked when hot by cold water being upset on it when a heavy boiling pan is being placed on the stove.

When cooking beets for table use try baking them as you would a potato. They retain all their juicy sweetness and are much superior to boiled beets and less trouble to prepare.

Grease stains on leather may be removed by carefully applying benzine or perfectly pure turpentine. Wash the spots over afterward with the well beaten white of an egg or a good leather reviver.

❦

Health Notes.

When walking keep the chest elevated and breathe deeply through the nose. A long walk may then be taken without exhausting effects.

The constant use on the teeth of powdered charcoal or pumice stone is injurious, as such powders break the enamel and the teeth will then quickly decay.

The daily use of the curling iron will often cause the hair to become harsh and broken. This is caused by the heat taking away the natural oil. See that the iron is only moderately hot or abandon its use altogether.

In treating the scalp for dryness use olive oil. Put a small quantity of the oil in a saucer. Use a very small brush (a child's toothbrush is good for this purpose). Before applying the oil to the roots all tangles must be removed and the hair divided into two parts. Into the parting line, a little oil is rubbed, using the finger tips only. Then another clear line, close to the first, is made and the operation is repeated until the whole scalp has been covered. Do not apply more than the scalp will readily absorb. One application two or three times a week is sufficient. You will find that this application of olive oil, besides neutralizing the condition of dryness and making the hair easier to handle, has the added virtue of tonic properties, and if it is massaged into the scalp beneficial results will be pronounced. A little vaseline—a very, very little on the tip of each finger—rubbed carefully into the scalp twice or three times a week is also beneficial to dry hair.

❦

Recipes.

FRUIT SOUP—Cherry—Use one quart sour cherries; pit and crack stones and boil in two quarts of water for ten minutes. Strain and pour over cherries. Sweeten to taste and thicken with two tablespoonfuls of cornstarch. Add a little lemon peel while boiling.

BLUEBERRY SOUP—Use one quart berries; boil in two quarts of water. Sweeten to taste. Thicken with two tablespoonfuls of cornstarch, a little lemon peel, one-quarter teaspoonful butter. Serve with toast

GINGER DROPS—Take three eggs, one cup of lard, one of baking molasses, one of broken sugar, one large tablespoon of ginger, one tablespoon of soda in a cup of boiling water, five cups of unsifted flour. Drop tablespoons of this mixture into a slightly greased dripping pan about three inches apart.

RECIPE FOR COOKING RABBIT—Cut up the rabbit into desirable pieces, wash in three waters, then let it stand for at least an hour in salted water to which some red pepper has been added. When ready to cook put on in cold water, and as the water steams drain off as one would for chicken. Fill or cover over again with cold water, adding a little ginger, which takes away the mild flavor. One should cook it thoroughly. The meat is more delicious with the thickened gravy made into a pie.

CHEESE FONDU—One cup of ground crackers, one cup milk, three-fourths cup cheese, two eggs, whites and yolks beaten separately light; stir all together, and bake in a quick oven; serve immediately.

❦

Preparing Milk.

The following are different ways in which milk may be prepared for children who dislike to take milk:

Beat the yolk of an egg light, add a teaspoonful of sugar and half a teaspoonful of lemon juice; fill the cup with milk, stir well and call the mixture snow lemonade.

Heat a cupful of milk, but do not let it boil, sweeten it and flavor with a little cinnamon and pour from a tiny teapot, calling it cinnamon tea.

Put a cupful of [illegible] one egg into a gla[illegible]

Cocoa made with milk is liked by most children, and is even more nutritious than the milk alone.

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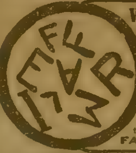

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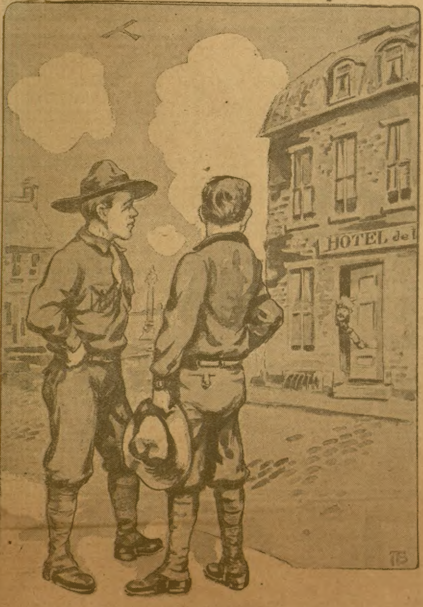
AEROPLANE BOY SCOUTS

Or, IN WAR-WRECKED BELGIUM

By WELDON J. COBB



Bob and Ned recognized the head servant of the hotel.

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CHAPTER I.

"THAT'S queer!" exclaimed Bob Ready, a Boy Scout.

"It's more than that," chipped in Ned Dayton, whose neat badge on the lapel of his coat designated him as a member of the same order. "I call it positively mysterious."

Thereupon two companions roused up, youths of about the same age, from half-dozing contemplation of the motley throng crowding the old barracks of a depot at Ehrle in war-wrecked Belgium. They joined in staring out at a locomotive pulling away a long empty train. Two big, fat guards kept forcing back the great throng that had waited two hours to get aboard the cars, only to see the train move away.

The air was snappy with animation and excitement. The mumble of a multitude of voices, coming in fragments, had a jerkiness that told of anxiety. The faces of men, women, and children were either fear-filled or eager. The group suggested a refugee gathering bent upon flight.

For two hours they had jostled, wrangled, pressed against the guards with queries, pleadings, and even tears. The four boys had grown wearied watching them and waiting for the iron gates to open. They had appropriated a whole bench, upon which was piled their baggage. Curled up at one end of it, a folded blanket under his head, was a robust, moon-faced boy of about 16, fast asleep. His attire was not so neat or expensive as that of the three others. Then, too, his face was of a distinctively different type.

Bob Ready, Ned Dayton, and the two others, Miles Bartlett and Tom Evans, had arisen to their feet. They craned their necks to view a man with a gold-braided cap who had just mounted a box. He was swinging one arm to emphasize what he was shouting out at the top of his voice. The crowd was listening intently, and there was a momentary lull in the turmoil.

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"What's his jargon?" spoke Tom Evans.

"Don't know. Ask Hans," suggested Ned Dayton.

"Yes, that's what he's here for," put in Miles Bartlett.

"Hey, Hans, wake up! Here's business for you," supplemented Bob Ready, and he gave the sleeper a sharp dig in the ribs.

"Ja! oui! yes!" gasped the slumberer, bolting to his feet promptly and rubbing his eyes and then staring confusedly about him. "Ach! voila! ah, I was dreaming! Vas?"

"Find out what the depot master is telling the people," directed Bob.

Hans Trokl ran outside the depot, wriggled his way in and out of the crowd like a slippery eel, and the four watchers saw him come to a halt ten feet from the personage who was the present center of interest.

Before the return of their envoy they surmised that the depot master must have given out some disturbing or enlightening information. There was a great rustling. The murmur of many voices again filled the air. There were violent gesticulations. Many who had rested their satchels and parcels at their feet took them up as though expecting something to happen. They crowded closer to their neighbors as if fearing something as well.

"Mein herr—monsieur—sir," began Hans breathlessly, rejoining the quartette.

"Cut out the triple-action business," ordered Bob, sharply. "What's up?"

"Trouble," announced Hans, with a fair English pronunciation of the ominous word. "The big iron bridge——"

The speaker paused there. He gave a nervous jump up into the air and a sharp gasp. His four auditors swayed a trifle, too, and Bob ran to the long window facing the street and peered out. The crowd on the depot platform moved with one accord, like ants in an unprotected hillock. There were shrieks from women in the group, an outcry from frightened children. Big, slow fellows, who had smoked with patient calmness, were suddenly keyed up to a nerve tension that showed in their disturbed faces.

The flimsy depot building had vibrated under an abrupt shock, a boom that told of an explosion not far distant.

"The attack has begun," spoke Ned, and he seemed disturbed and was about to dilate further on the incident, when Bob came back to the group.

"It's only a scare—a feint," he announced.

"How do you know?" challenged Tom.

"It was a shell, and it landed at the old army sheds by the river. The Germans know the Belgian regiments moved away from there a week ago. It's done for the moral effect of the thing, just as it has been done, harmlessly, in other places for the past three days."

"Three thousand miles away from home, and bombarded by the enemy!" observed Miles with a mock groan, for he was a joker on most occasions.

"Something to brag about to the fellows when we get back," submitted Ned, with a tinge of pride.

Hans stood looking uneasily toward the window. His teeth chattered and his eyes blinked, as if he was fearing another explosion.

"Here, Hans," sang out Tom, "you didn't finish your report."

"Of what use," asked Hans, "if we are to be butchered?"

"Nonsense!" railed Tom. "There isn't a corporal's guard of soldiers in the town, and the Germans know it. They are simply advertising themselves on duty. About the depot master, now?"

"He said that the enemy had removed the rails from the big iron bridge, that the Germans are moving into all quarters of the town, and trade and travel are blockaded."

"So we don't get homeward bound as fast as we thought," observed Bob.

"Why, say," here broke in Ned, "that train is backing in again."

"Yes, but on another track," spoke Bob. "They intend to leave town on the old switch tracks, if they can get ahead of the Germans."

Now came a scene of clamor, riot, and confusion, twenty times discounting the recent turmoil at the iron gates. These were swung open. The depot master had again mounted the box. He bellowed out some excited orders like a bull. Meantime he moved both hands in frantic motion, like one driving forward a lot of cattle. The guards dragged and pushed the waiting refugees along.

Treading on one another's heels, thinking only of getting aboard the train, the mob shouted, jostled, and groaned. Within a brief space of time the depot and the platforms were vacated. Bob and his fellows had started gathering up their baggage.

"See here," said Tom, with an anxious look in the direction of the street, "what about the Professor?"

Bob glanced at his watch. He was serious-faced and thoughtful.

"He should have been here, according to our appointment, half an hour ago," he remarked.

"He will have to come soon, if he expects to get away at all," said Ned.

"Wonder if his trunk has come?" remarked Miles. "You know he said he would attend to that himself."

"I haven't noticed it among the stuff they're piling on the baggage car now," said Bob.

"How much time have we got, I wonder?" spoke Tom.

"Not much, I think," answered Hans. "See, they are rushing everybody into the cars like cattle. "Aha! Why, the guards are also going abroad! And the train master! It is strange. I see. You wait here, and Hans darted away again.

"Say," broke in Ned, suddenly, "I hope nothing has happened to the Professor."

"Nothing more serious than becoming abstracted over some newly discovered relic or an old Flemish curio," remarked Bob.

Hans came rushing back to them after a hurried confab with the depot master.

"Three minutes!" he panted, his big eyes goggling. "It is a speedy choice."

"What is?" demanded Bob.

"Go, or stay. Mein herr, the depot master says it is a quick dash before the Germans blockade the lower town."

"We can't go without the Professor," began Ned.

"We won't go without the Professor," added Bob, quietly.

"No, the next train will do; we'll wait," announced Tom.

"Say, there won't be any next train!" vociferated Hans.

"That so?"

"It is true. This is the last out, and the depot master says it may not get through. Two minutes—after that—bombs and the soldiers!"

Ned kicked aside the satchel at his foot. Tom threw off the knapsack from his shoulders, Miles sat down again, Bob jumped upon the seat.

"One minute!" gurgled Hans, growing pale and shaking.

"Attention!" shouted Bob, waving his hand like a gavel. "All in favor of waiting for the Professor, say aye."

"Aye!"

"Aye!"

"Aye!"

"Carried!"

"The train is starting. It is our last chance," quavered Hans.

"Let her go!" retorted Bob.

Then, by a common impulse, five pairs of eyes watched the train pull out from under the platform awning and start down the uneven rails lining the river. They were curious and interested, rather than uneasy or alarmed, although they were practically marooned in the center of an active war zone and three thousand miles away from home.

CHAPTER II.

THE boys' made quick work of the informal decision of their impromptu chairman. With one accord they piled their belongings back on the bench. Then they went out into the open air, Bob in the lead.

For some minutes they stood watching the course of the train. It swayed dangerously from side to side, but full steam was on. Evidently those in charge were only aware that time was the essence of the occasion.

Hans was the only one of the group who could not stand still. He hopped about in a restless, serious way, mumbling gloomy words and scanning all points of the compass. Once he ran back from the extreme end of the platform, where he had been studying the streets lying before him like an open map. It was to hail the others.

"The Germans are all through the upper town!" he declared.

"Yes, and look over there!" suggested Bob.

He pointed, and his comrades crowded close to follow the indication of his index finger. The train had just cleared the end of a long but low trestlework covering a marshy stretch at the end of the freight yards.

"Just in time to miss it, hey?" piped Ned, getting excited at a bird's-eye view of a new sensation on the program.

Perhaps half a hundred uniformed soldiers were running across a flat stretch toward the trestle. Their purpose was manifest. The train had swung out on a free track beyond the yards, and it looked like unobstructed progress ahead. The group of soldiers massed and then spread over the trestle. They seemed to center at about the middle of it. Then, after working about one spot, they retreated the way they had come.

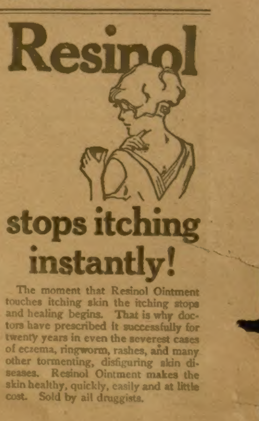
Boom! came a dull, heavy sound. There was a splotch of fire, smoke, and slivered timbers, and then as the haze cleared away a great gap was visible in the trestlework.

"That settles it, I'm thinking, said Tom. "No further going or coming by rail."

"We won't reach France in a hurry now," observed Miles.

"Oh, I don't know—the walking is good," remarked Ned, lightly.

"If they let you walk," suggested Bob. "You know we've read about just this kind of doings, and we can guess what this means."



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"And that?" exclaimed Miles, almost in a shout.

In the open street beyond the depot entrance there was a sharp clatter, and the boys saw a company of soldiers pass near them and then away down a side street on a double-quick run.

The walking might be good, as Ned had observed, but the question of "being let" made Miles serious and Bob pensive. He might well be, for there was a heap to think of. It was not going to be easy to do any walking beyond narrow limits that would soon be prescribed. Walking was a decided feature with all four of the boys. The picture of a free and open hike was not, however, in their minds just now.

It was only in their memories that they could revive their past hiking exploits. These had been many. It seemed only a small space to span, their departure from a quiet Ohio village to their arrival in a quaint Belgian town. Variety and enjoyment had been the program all along the line. The war element that had come under their notice during the past week had been flavored with a certain species of pleasurable excitement.

"It's all right," spoke up Ned, abruptly, "but how about the Professor?"

"Yes, there's the nub of the present proposition," said Bob, a trifle anxiously. "He was to have been here at a certain time, and he is usually prompt. The situation has got skittish, and we don't know where he is. Fellows, you know his great maxim, 'System and order before everything.' I've a suggestion to make. Miles, try and keep Hans from having a fit."

Hans alone of the group was nervous, if not really scared. He kept moving about uneasily. His interest and interests were not those of the others. Hans was loyal and good-hearted and all that, but his position was entirely that of a mercenary.

It was at Paris that Professor Silas Deane, A. B., had come across him, directed to an expert veteran guide and interpreter who bore the proud distinction of intimately knowing every corner of Europe. The Professor's program for himself and his young companions was to do foreign countries right. He had a smattering of German and he could read French, but he could not speak it understandingly to a native. He was greatly disappointed when the old guide informed him that his days of bustle and activity were over.

However, there was the son, Hans, trained up to follow his father's profession. A little coaching and he would do. The Professor was dubious for a spell, but meantime Bob and the others had formed a closer acquaintance with Hans. They found him agreeable and accommodating. He had his whimsies and he was indolent at times, but he took a boyish view of things. Hans was engaged. He began his convoy, and they passed the frontier, missing nothing of importance as to points of interest. Hans knew little about them personally; a well-thumbed notebook of his father enabled him to identify and describe.

At Ehrle the route was blocked. The war had become a settled fact. Anxious as the Professor was to view the beauties of Antwerp and inspect the great cathedral of Rheims, he scented the danger ahead and approaching.

A scurry across western Belgium and a diversion among the Swiss cantons was blocked out and agreed upon. The day set for this change in their plans had been nearly a week back. Then, quite casually, Hans led the Professor up against an erudite old antiquarian in Ehrle. The latter was the proud possessor of some antiques that at first sight fairly enraptured the Professor. There were manuscripts and inscriptions in the natural stone, the like of which the Professor had never seen before.

The result was what might have been expected. Day succeeded day, and the Professor was gone from morning until night, gloating over rare treasures of art and literature, filling his wise old head with more and newer wisdom. The boys had been left to themselves. There was no lack of objects and doings to interest them, however. They put in the time pleasantly and profitably enough. There were hikes to distant castles and old mills, and famous battlegrounds of the past. Hans got crippled and groaned over the strain of a sharp ten miles' sprint on many an occasion.

Then Ned would get out his pack kit and Miles his hiker's kit and Tom his ditty kit. They would instruct Hans in the art of drying wet shoes by filling them with heated oats, or show him what salt and water would do for tired feet, or buckle on a marching strap and teach him the bent pull stride.

It was quite a revival of home service, where Bob had won the athletic badge and was a patrol leader. The boys wore the scout uniforms, and they felt a good deal of pride in the pleased comments of intelligent persons who recognized the service from what they had read and pictures they had seen in the newspapers and magazines.

"We'll initiate you into the Boy Scouts, Hans, when we get back to Paris," Miles had laughingly declared more than once.

"Yes, you'll be ten times the guide you are now when you get through with us," Ned had added, and just now Bob suspected some new mischief as Ned took Tom and Miles aside, and they put their heads mysteriously together in serious discussion of some plan that had presented itself to their attention. Finally they seemed to reach a decision, and separated and came toward Bob.

"See here, Bob," observed Ned, acting the spokesman of the trio, "we've made ourselves a special committee to act in a case of necessity. You're appointed by unanimous vote."

"What to do, may I ask?" half smiled Bob.

"As deputy international scout master. We can let things slide, and think we're the salt of the earth, and that no one will dare to bother us, but I don't fancy the Germans will give us any special diploma to ramble as we please."

"I guess not, and we'll soon find it out, too," proclaimed Miles. "We're in a mess, and we won't wiggle out of it any easier than the natives will," asserted Tom.

"So," continued Ned, "there's got to be a head and tail to things and you're elected to be the head."

"I accept the responsibility," said Bob.

"You're the wise one of the bunch——"

"Hear! hear!" piped Miles.

"You've passed all the home degrees."

"Good! good!" echoed Tom.

"So, we look to you for orders."

"Very well," nodded Bob agreeably. "First thing, let us get our traps in order."

"Tom, you attend to that and wait here on the chance that the Professor may show up."

"That's sense," commended Tom.

"We will go back to the hotel," went on Bob. "You had better come with us, Hans."

"I am not afraid," observed Hans with a great show of bracing up.

"We had better find out if they know anything about the whereabouts of the Professor back at our hotel," resumed Bob, as they left their two companions.

"It's strange his trunk didn't come," cried Ned. "You know, he arranged about that first thing this morning. He was to make a flying visit to his new antiquarian friend and join us at the depot."

"Of course we must locate him," responded Bob, and there came a slight shade of uneasiness into his face. As they left the vicinity of the depot things had changed very greatly since they had started for there three hours before.

There were few people in the streets. All the stores were closed and barricaded. Indeed, the greater part of the population had left Ehrle on the three trains that had gone out since morning.

The houses were closely sheltered and looked deserted. At some windows a pale, scared face would peer out furtively. Whole companies marched swiftly across the town. The boys avoided them where possible. Where they became hedged in, they entered a doorway and kept silent and submissive till the fierce, frowning soldiers, stern-looking and impressive, had passed by.

"Here we are," observed Bob, with a relieved and hopeful feeling, as they at length turned a corner and came in view of the little hotel where they had been guests for the past week or more.

"Why," cried Ned, looking all over its front, "it's shut up! I believe they have deserted it."

Just then from a side lane a wagon attached to two horses came rapidly along the side of the building and started for the next corner. The driver was a soldier in uniform. Three others were behind the seat, and in the middle of the wagon was a box or chest on which sat two others.

The horses circled into the street, passed the boys, who had halted, and wheeled along to the next corner so rapidly that it bade fair speedily to get out of sight.

"Ah, look! Truly, I see—I see!" exclaimed Hans, and made a spring forward as if to pursue the wagon. "The Professor! He hires me, he pays me——"

"Hold on!" demurred Bob, grabbing the excited lad by the arm and halting him with a sharp jerk. "What do you see?"

"The Professor?" questioned Ned.

"No!" shouted Hans, struggling free and darting down the middle of the street in hot pursuit of the fast disappearing vehicle. "In the wagon—the Professor's trunk!"

CHAPTER III.

"HE'S right," called out Bob, sharply, staring hard, and in his excitement he gripped Ned's arm so tightly that his companion winced.

The latter, as well as Hans, had caught sight of and recognized the trunk being carried away in the soldier-guarded wagon. The trunk was an old-style American make; the boys had passed jokes upon its antiquity many a time. There were few tourists in Ehrle; it came from the little hotel, so there was not likely to be any mistake in their conclusions.

"This looks sort of ominous," suggested Bob, thinking fast.

"Yes, when you come to connect the Professor with the trunk and those soldiers, why——"

"Come on!" cried Bob. "The Professor isn't here, at any rate, and we've got to find him."

Wagon, soldiers and Hans had by this time disappeared around the corner. The two chums started in that direction. Not ten feet advanced they were halted summarily.

There was a narrow passageway leading in from the street between the hotel and the building adjoining. As they neared this, a neat active figure in official uniform stepped into view and treading on his heels were three soldiers. The leader of the coterie stepped to the middle of the sidewalk and barred progress by slanting the sheathed sword he wore at his side directly in front of the boys.

"Halt!" he ordered, but pleasantly enough.

Instinctively the unexpected appearance and word of command aroused all that was martial in the boys. They came to upright, toes squared, chins high, and made a quick salute, every inch young soldiers.

A speedy smile, pleased and admiring, crossed the face of the officer. He studied the faces of the boys keenly, and half-turned his head as one of the soldiers spoke some quick words, at the same time pointing to the hotel, as if connecting them with that domicile.

The officer nodded, then to the surprise of the boys he spoke in very good English."

"You are of the party stopping at the hotel?"

"That's it," bobbed Ned in his impetuous way. "We are Americans."

As Ned spoke he threw back one side of his coat. Its lapel bore the athletic medal of the Boy Scouts, but he did not trust to it that a foreign officer would understand what it stood for. Holding back the coat, he revealed plainly pinned to his vest front a little silk American flag.

There was an indulgent twinkle in the eyes of the young officer. Perhaps he felt like humoring the boys; it might have been mockery, or else the fine military behavior of the boys really pleased him. At all events he dropped a low, quick word to his fellows, and he and

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they touched their caps as if in tribute to the flag presented.

"You belong at the hotel," went on the officer. "Of the party of Professor Deane, I assume?"

"Why, yes, that's right," assented Ned quickly. "Say, you don't know him?"

"I have the pleasure," bowed the officer, though in a reserved way, and offered no further comment on that point.

"We are looking for him," explained Bob. "He was to have met us at the railroad station. We were to have left Ehrle today."

"I know," observed the officer, and Bob fancied that face and manner hardened a trifle.

"You can't tell us where we might find him, can you?" broke in Ned, urgently.

"My young friends," came the reply, "it will be as well for you to defer any search for Professor Deane for the present."

"Why is that?" inquired Ned, but the officer ignored the query and went on:

"As well, too, that you find some permanent home and see to it that you are named in the new registration. We can make no distinctions in the general embargo."

"You mean we will have to stay in Ehrle?" propounded Bob.

"Indefinitely," came the terse response, and Bob noted in the way the word was spoken a kind of severity he did not like. He spoke out plainly, as was his usual way.

"Lieutenant, won't you please tell us just where we stand and what we are to expect? As outsiders, of course we have no business here, but that is not our fault, you see."

"You should have left here before," spoke the officer. "There was plenty of warning and opportunity."

"Perhaps," agreed Bob, "but Professor Deane had some business that detained him here."

"You mean with his scientific friend?" broke in the officer sharply, in fact, quite harshly.

"Yes, sir. You see, the Professor is interested in art and science and——"

"I know all about your Professor and also this friend," interrupted the German Lieutenant brusquely. "Present arms!" he added, coming to a salute stiff as a poker. "You will be wise to present yourself for registration," he added quickly in an undertone.

Then Bob and Ned drew to one side. A group of officers came down the street and the Lieutenant and his men, after they had gone by, fell in behind them in marching order, and the group disappeared, leaving the chums staring vaguely at one another.

"Well, that's cool," observed Ned.

"It puts us on a basis," returned Bob. "It is simple and plain. We are shut up here with the others, no favors shown."

"But the Professor? Where can he be?"

"That is the phase of the case I don't like," remarked Bob, soberly. "The way that officer spoke of the Professor and his friend had an undertone that sounded like a threat."

"Well, what are we going to do?" questioned Ned.

"It's a muddle," confessed Bob. "I suppose Hans and the trunk are past [illegible]g for. Why, there is somebody!"

One of the side doors of the little hotel was cautiously opened. A shock of red tousled hair protruded into view, a pale twitching face beneath it. Its owner stared up and then down the deserted street in a terror-stricken way. Bob and Ned recognized the head servant of the hotel.

He seemed glad to view familiar and friendly faces as the boys advanced. He drew them inside the doorway and began gesticulating, breaking out into a jargon of mixed Flemish and English. It did not take the boys long to get the key to his excited and disconnected discourse.

The man indicated to them, by leading them from room to room, vacancy and desolation. His affrighted employers and the guests had been among the refugees on the last train leaving Ehrle. He was alone and scared. Would the boys remain for company?

"What about the Professor and the trunk?" Bob inquired.

In his broken talk the man told that the Professor had not been back to the hotel since morning; no one had come for the trunk. An hour previous, however, the Lieutenant and soldiers the boys had met had appeared. They had banged at the door, and he had opened it. The Lieutenant had stated his mission speedily. He ordered the servant to take them at once to the room the Professor had occupied.

That they searched the furniture, even the bedclothes, the hotel servant made plain enough to his interested auditors. Then they lifted the trunk. They took it away. Ach! the end had come. There would be no more hotel, no more Ehrle, no more anything!

All this looked pretty ominous to Bob. His anxiety and indecision were shared by Ned. They discussed the feasibility of going to the depot and helping Tom and Miles bring the baggage to the hotel.

"You see, we may as well take shelter here as anywhere else," suggested Ned. "It's a central point. Hans will probably soon report here, the Professor, too, if—if"—Ned gulped a little dismally —"if he's alive."

"Oh, I guess there is no doubt about his being alive," said Bob. "As to his being free to come to us, that is another question."

"Why, what do you mean?" challenged Ned.

"Well, to tell the truth," replied Bob, "I think the Germans have got him—as a prisoner."

"They wouldn't dare!" flared up Ned. Then he added in a more subdued tone, "Why should they make him a prisoner?"

"And why should they be so anxious to get his trunk?" questioned Bob. "We must work out both problems and find out where he and we stand. First and foremost, we must report to Tom and Miles."

The hotel servant followed them to the street, in a timid, anxious way, exhorting them to return and make the place their lodgings. He felt it a duty to remain forlornly at his post until he saw how affairs were going to turn out.

Bob assured the lonesome and badly frightened fellow that he would see them again. They started in the direction of the railroad depot. It was getting on toward dusk, and the situation appeared grimmer and more foreboding than ever. They passed few people, and these hurrying or slinking along, silent and worried-looking. They were turning into the street leading to the depot when a sharp kloppety-klop! echoed from the cobblestones of the street behind them. Then there was a hail.

"It is Hans," announced Bob, halting.

The deserter came flying distractedly toward them. He was pale and breathless. He halted as he reached them, all in a tremble.

"The Professor!" he gasped.

"You found him? You have seen him?" inquired Bob eagerly.

"Nein! non! no!" vociferated Hans, adding desolately, "He has been arrested By the Germans——!"

And then Hans gave out the final announcement in the jerky sentence:

"As a spy!"

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

Harmony in A-Flat.

It was during house-cleaning. He had just come up the front stairs from the basement, dragging the dining-room rug after him into the hall, when his wife halted him peremptorily.

"Why, John Finch!" she exclaimed, with horror. "Don't you know any better than to bring that dirty rug up the front stairs into my clean house?"

"Well, dearie," he apologized, "I supposed you had cleaned it. I didn't know it was dirty."

"Dirty!" she exclaimed fearfully. "I have cleaned it—the very idea!"—and her thundering tones made him blink involuntarily. "But can't you see you are tracking up my house with your dirty feet?"

"I thought it was the rug you said was dirty?" he argued feebly.

"No, no, no! A thousand times no!" she exclaimed emphatically. "It is your dirty feet. How many times have I told you not to come up the front way into my house?"

He was getting a little peeved by this time.

"Your house?" he returned contemptuously, accenting the "yours." "Since when?"

"Yes, my house, John Finch," she said; "and I want you to understand it. When you married me, you said——"

"Oh, all right! All right!" he interrupted, with emphasis, raising a deprecating hand and trying to drown her out by sheer lung power. She paid no attention.

"You said," she went on, raising her voice to even a higher pitch, "that after we were married, we should own everything in common, and if there was ever any question as to ownership, I was always to be in the right, no matter what! Didn't you say that?"

He made no answer, but dropped sulking into his easy-chair, thrusting his pipe unlit into his mouth and holding the evening paper stiffly before him, as though he were reading.

"And you said," she continued unmercifully, tears welling into her eyes and choking her voice till it sounded pitiful indeed, "you said you loved me then —when I was young and pretty; but now, when I no longer possess——"

"But, listen, now," he protested, trying to get a word in edgeways.

"When I no longer possess the beauty you used to rave about," she continued, "what do you do? Yes, that's what I say. What do you do? I'll tell you what you do: You abuse me! Yes, abuse me—run me down every chance you get, just because I am a poor, defenseless woman who can't protest!"

"Why, Helen, I——"

"You keep throwing it up at me that you own everything, and I'm nothing but a mere chattel to you, like the rest of the furniture."

"Why, I——"

"And I shan't stand it any longer! I shall pick up my duds and go right home to mother!"

"Why, Helen, you know everything is yours to do with as you like," he finally protested; but she only sobbed.

He arose, overcome with her emotion, and took her in his arms, patting her consolingly on the back.

"There, now, don't cry," he said. "You can have anything you want in this wide world, if you'll only stop crying."

She looked up into his face, smiling with a suddenness that startled him. "Do you mean it, dearie?" she said, all the while fondling the charm on his watch chain.

"If you'll only dry up those tears," he answered.

"Oh, I'm so happy!" she returned. And then suddenly, "Do you know, John, we've been married just a year tomorrow?"

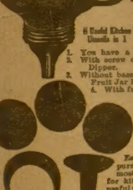
"By Jove!" he sighed, hardly knowing whether to feel pleased or not. "That's right—a whole year! And we're so happy, aren't we, dear?" and he squeezed her a little tighter.

"Uh-huh," she murmured demurely, as she fondly straightened the lapel on his coat.

The next day some jeweler in that town got two months of John's salary, and one more husband was a little wiser and a little meeker than he had ever been before.—Judge.

* * *

Sometimes a man refrains from saying the wrong thing by keeping his face closed.



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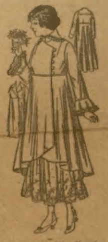

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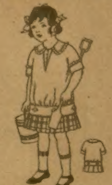

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THE FAIRY CORNER

THE FOURTH.

The Fourth of July is almost here,
The day that America holds so dear;
The day of flags and cannon and bells,
When patriotism in each breast swells;
The day of fireworks gorgeous to view;
The day of burned fingers, and faces, too!
Oh, Fourth of July is almost here,
And we're thankful it comes but once a
year!

A WILL AND A WAY

Salt and Pepper were two puppies, the fattest and most mischievous little rascals that ever lived. They had to be banished to the kitchen, for they chewed up and destroyed so many articles in the house that their master said unless the kitchen took temptation out of their paths they would have to be sent away to a man who knew how to teach puppies good manners and good morals as well.

Salt and Pepper did not know what fate was awaiting them, but frisked and frolicked all day long, nearly driving Norah, the cook, out of her mind with their "troublesomeness." This was Norah's own word and she should be given all credit for it.

One day the butcher came into the kitchen and deposited on the table a graceful and nice-smelling string of sausages. You should have seen the eyes of Salt and Pepper as the odor of the sausages was wafted to their nostrils. What were they made of to smell so good? Who knows? What goes into a sausage is known to no one in the world, much less to two silly, ignorant little pups like the ones sniffing the air and looking so longingly at that artistic string of sausages—so far above their reach on the kitchen table.

"Norah, Norah," called the voice of the mistress.

"Yes, ma'am, I'm coming," answered Norah. Before she left, however, Norah turned her eye on the pups and in terrible voice said:

"If ayther of you bastes touch them sausages while I'm gone, I'll cook ye for lunch yourself."

This dreadful threat made Salt and Pepper tremble in their boots, if they had any, and Norah went upstairs leaving them alone with their temptation.

You don't suppose that Salt and Pepper were going to let such a chance go, do you? They had determined from the minute their eyes had fallen on the sausages that they were to be theirs somehow, someway—but how? That was the question. At first they tried jumping up to the table, but it was no use. Next they tried knocking the broom down, hoping that the handle would shove the delicate morsels their way. It did not. Instead it fell in the other direction and the sausages remained maddeningly near, but hopelessly far away.

Breathless and almost discouraged, the two puppies sat down to think. This is always a good thing to do—even if one is a puppy and supposed to be a trifle foolish. Salt was the quickest-witted and usually the leader in all sorts of mischief. This day was no exception. A smile came over his face and bending over to where Pepper lay, he whispered:

"I've got it, old fellow. Don't lose heart. Where there's a will there's a way. Do you see that object lying there?"

"What object?" replied Pepper. "I don't see anything but that box. I don't like that box anyway. The baby has already scared me to death with it twice, and I never go near it if I can avoid it."

"Well, you will have to do so now, that is, if you still have any appetite for those sausages."

The mention of sausages spurred Pepper on to inquire what plan Salt had thought of whereby the sausages could be transferred from the table to the stomachs of two greedy little dogs.

Salt did not waste any time in useless conversation. He pushed the box a little nearer the table and ordered Pepper to get up on it. Pepper did so in fear and trembling, but Salt encouraged him by telling him that he should have an extra share of the sausage when that happy time arrived.

Trembling as if he were standing on a lighted firecracker, Pepper mounted the innocent box. At this time he had no idea what his clever brother intended to do next. His brother had, however, told Pepper that all he had to do was to grab the sausages when he reached the table and jump down with them. These instructions sounded very easy. Salt pressed the button and Pepper was expected to do the rest. The box was one known in the nursery as a "Jack in the box" and was a splendid, strong fellow. He had cost so much [illegible]ney that the baby's mother had sc[illegible] the baby's father for his extravagan[illegible] when he had brought it home to th[illegible]by a short while before.

When Jack bobbed up [illegible]ly Pepper rose at the same time. [illegible] scared almost to death at this [illegible] happening, but was quickly [illegible] he saw that he was actual[illegible] table a few inches f[illegible]sages. In an in[illegible] the floo[illegible]

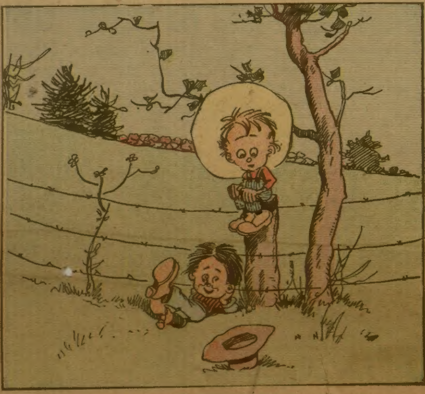
a hasty attack also, and then both pups did what in the country is styled "pitched in." They gobbled and gulped and strangled in a most unhygienic fashion until not a vestige of the sausages was left.

When Norah returned she searched high and low for the dainties. She could not blame Salt and Pepper, for they had been too far beyond their reach, but when she searched for the rascals (who had had the decency to hide under the table) she had no doubt of the thieves. Their stomachs stuck out like pouches, and Norah declared that a sausage mounted on the end of each stubby tail. Not having seen them, I cannot say that Norah exaggerated, but I can vouch for the statement that there never were two sicker pups than Salt and Pepper before many hours had passed.

A Celebration.

Billy and Nat and the other boys were on their way to the village to buy fireworks for the Fourth when they saw a queer-looking wagon moving toward them. It looked like a hencoop on wheels, but when it came nearer they found it was a huge cage with an eagle in it.

The boys surrounded the wagon at once, and fired a perfect volley of questions at the driver.



"How'd you like to have all the ice cream you wanted?"
"Aw, there ain't that much in the world! Shut up!"

"I took that eagle from the nest when it was little," he explained; "and I have just been carrying it to town to sell to the show; but the show is gone, so I must cart him back."

"Why, you ought to let him fly!" cried Billy. "Don't you know, tomorrow is the Fourth, and I guess George Washington would not have liked very well to see the American eagle cooped up like a chicken!"

The man laughed. "Well, now, if you boys feel so, why don't you buy him and let him loose tomorrow? He would go up like skyrockets."

The boys looked at each other. "That's so!" they all cried together.

So a bargain was struck, and they carried the eagle home in triumph. That evening the following handbill was posted around Merryville:

"Great sillybration! the Bird of his Country will make an a cent on the 4th of July! at 3 sharp with 2 flags give him Libbaty or give him Death admission 5 cents."

Quite a crowd gathered the next day to see the novel entertainment. The cage was set in their midst, and the eager boys quickly pried off the stout wooden bars. Then the beautiful bird darted out with a rush and a whir that made every one start. He spread his grand wings, fluttering the little flags that were tied to their tips, and soared away over the heads of the crowd.

They watched him sailing round and round in great circles, till at last he was only a speck in the sky, and then was gone.

Then Nat began to count their gate-money, while Billy said solemnly, "Better than skyrockets!"

His Authority.

"I caught a little boy fish yesterday," said Tommy.

"A little what?"

"[illegible]ttle boy fish. Papa said it was

FOURTH OF JULY ASTRONOMY.

Our stars tonight are floating high,
To greet the stars that line the sky;
These sparkle out from banners bright,
And those drop down their silver light;
While rocket-stars between them go
On shining errands to and fro.

Stilt Walkers.

The first travelers to the Marquesas Islands, in the southern Pacific Ocean, found them peopled with a race of athletes, whose clothes lasted till they had no more need of clothes, for their costume was the skin with which the Creator had covered their bodies. The islanders had improved upon it, moreover, for they were tattooed from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. As they are an enormous race this was no small undertaking. Their chiefs, chosen on account of their size, have sometimes measured 6 feet 10 inches.

One would think that tall enough, yet these people are the greatest stilt walkers in the world. They execute performances, too, that would drive a stilt-walking clown wild with envy. They run races on stilts and dance and jump, and it is considered a mark of politeness for one-stilt-walking savage to trip up another. One might say "trip down," for the tripped person generally comes down with a vengeance.

The stilts the Marquesas use are a little different from those of our boys. In place of straps the Marquesas stilt has a curved block that holds the foot more securely.

THE CANDLE LIGHT.

Although I'm almost four, sometimes
I'm frightened in the night.
So mother says, "Don't be afraid,
I'll leave a candle light."

A little light the watch to keep,
Until I sing myself to sleep.

I love to watch the tiny flame
That flickers to and fro,
And watch the straight, white candle,
Which must always shorter grow;

For when I wake in early morn,
The candle every bit has gone.

If little boys should all grow short,
Instead of growing tall,
Some morning would their mothers find
They had no sons at all?

I'm very glad that we all know
The proper way for boys to grow.

Johnny's Definition.

It was in the definition class; teacher was giving out the words to spell, and explaining them at the same time. "N-a-p, nap, that means a little sleep, you know, Johnny. K-i-n, kin, that means of a family, belonging to the family; do you understand?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Pretty soon the class was called up again, and the word "napkin" came up.

"Can any one tell what napkin means? What is it?" asked the teacher.

"I know," yells Johnny, "a sleepy family."

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